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The Rough Rider;

Or, FIGHTING HORACE'S SECRET

By Adrienne Roucolle

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CHAPTER VI.

THE MEETING.

THE man was not long allowed to remain lost in his painful meditation, for the sharp, acid voice of Sallie came from behind the closed side door, saying:

"Now you wait, young man, you ought to have seen you didn't like the horses before you bought them. It's too late now."

The stranger started like one rudely awakened from sleep, and looking up, saw the door open and Captain Wilbur enter, followed by the angry and menacing Sallie. The young captain was white with anger, as he answered the woman's sharp remark:

"Do you know you are speaking to Captain Wilbur of the Rough Riders?" he said.

In one leap the man by the table had jumped forward with the hoarse exclamation, "Captain Wilbur!"

"Yes, sir," answered the captain, turning with a start, but Sallie gave neither a chance for further speech, for with a glad cry she hurried forward, her hands extended, her eyes bright and shining, her plain face transfigured with joy.

"Fighting Horace!" she cried, as she seized both of his hands in hers, "how does it come you're here all alone? Where are the boys? What must you think of us not to have been here to welcome you? Will you ever forgive us?

"There, there my good Sallie," protested Fighting Horace, with an amused smile. "Don't excuse yourself; I know you're far too grateful to me for the little service I was able to render you."

Sallie would have protested farther, but Horace, seeing the captain making for the door, called after him, his face once more dark and stern:

"Just a minute, Captain Wilbur, I should like a few words with you."

The captain turned in amazement, and returned toward the stranger who thus addressed him, while Horace was continuing speaking to Sallie:

"Sallie, would you do me the favor of leaving me alone with Captain Wilbur for a few minutes?"

"To be sure I will; the inn is yours as well as everybody in it. I'll tell Ralph and Lola that you're here," and without farther questioning, obeying blindly the man's wishes, the big woman left the room and the two men were alone.

For a few seconds neither spoke as they faced each other, the captain with ever increasing astonishment, the other with a look hard to define, being a mixture of sadness, suffering, anger and envy.

"Well, we are alone," finally said Wilbur, unable to longer stand the mysterious gaze the other man fixed upon him.

Instead of answering the question, Fighting Horace asked:

"If I am not mistaken, you are indeed Captain Albert Wilbur?"

"That is my name."

"You are the one who is engaged to marry Mrs. Horace Culbert, whose maiden name was June Ashley?"

The captain cast an uneasy look on the white face of his questioner. He noticed that his lips were quivering with repressed emotion while in the depth of the eyes fixing his, could be seen a look of intense suffering. In spite of himself, Wilbur felt compelled to answer while hating himself for so doing:

"Yes. Do you know her?" he said.

A bitter laugh answered him, then sobering down, Fighting Horace replied slowly, a pause between each word:

"I know her husband very well."

"You know——then he is not dead?" cried the captain in sudden excitement.

"In his instance death did not seem to love a shining mark," came the bitter reply.

"What is he doing?"

"He is trying to forget."

"Where is he?"

"Somewhere in the west; I don't think he would care to have his whereabouts known."

Questions and replies crossed each other rapidly, the captain's excitement increasing with each question, while Horace became colder and calmer with each answer. Then came a pause. Wilbur hesitated. He lowered his eyes, his

manner became embarrassed, a dull red stole to his cheeks. It was evident the next question was to be a most vital one. Finally it came, slowly, painfully, with a pause between the words:

"Has he—told you why—he left—his—wife in that heartless manner?"

"He has," gravely answered the other, "and that is one of the reasons why I wanted this little talk. As one about to marry the lady you certainly have the right to know why her husband left her. It is a man to man service."

Unnoticed by the two men, Bates had entered the room at the time Fighting Horace had stated that he knew Mrs. Culbert's former husband. Scenting a story, the reporter had paused to listen, and now fearing to lose one of the spoken words, assured of a scoop if his presence was not detected and the story could be wired in, he drew nearer cautiously.

"I understand," remarked Captain Wilbur, "he had ceased to care for her."

"Would to God he had!" cried Horace, with such vehemence that Wilbur started back with a sudden suspicion in his eyes, seeing which Horace explained hurriedly: "I have been made the witness of his agony so many times, I have seen his tears of despair, heard from his lips the confession of his torturing love, which nothing was able to kill, that I naturally feel strongly upon the subject. Remember he is my friend."

"Then why did he leave her?" the question choked in the young officer's throat.

Fighting Horace hesitated a second, a sudden flood of pity stole over him at the thought of what wreck his words would make of this young man's life. He saw in the dreamy blue eyes of his questioner the capacity for intense suffering, yet better that he should know and suffer than to ignore and be deceived, as the other had been. Slowly he answered:

"There wasn't room in her heart for two lovers."

Captain Wilbur leaped at him with the hoarse demand: "Great God, you don't mean to insinuate that she——?" He paused, unable to continue.

Pitilessly Horace finished the incomplete sentence: "Had a lover, yes!"

Wilbur sprang forward in sudden rage. He would have thrown himself bodily upon the one who had dared insult with such an infamous accusation the woman he loved, but Horace was prepared for him. Extending his strong arm, he held the young man back, his calm contrasting with the other's excitement.

"You lie!" screamed Wilbur, powerless to break Fighting Horace's resistance.

"You can say what you please, I will not take up the insult since there can be no quarrel between us now," the statement, if you will remember was made to me, I am simply repeating what I have heard and which I know to be true, since I can not doubt the source of my information."

Subdued by the calm of the voice which thus addressed him, Wilbur retreated a few steps, then demanded in tones quivering with suppressed rage:

"Then show me the one who is responsible and I will force that infamous lie down his throat!"

"Would it not be wiser to first have the lady's assurance that it is a lie?" sneeringly asked Horace.

"I would not insult her by asking her to deny such a charge," replied Wilbur with proud dignity.

Bates felt he knew all there was to be known for the present; he had the clue, it was for him to follow it out; so not wishing to be caught eavesdropping, he began to work his way to the outer door. Horace bowed in answer to Wilbur's last remark, saying:

"Suit yourself," then catching sight of the reporter and recognizing him as the man who, earlier in the afternoon had interviewed him concerning his enlistment, he added hurriedly as he pointed to Bates, "better stop that fellow from wiring the story he has just overheard to his paper!"

Turning, Captain Wilbur had just time to catch a glimpse of the vanishing reporter. With an oath, he was in hot pursuit and Fighting Horace was alone. For a while the man did not move, gazing still with an unseeing stare toward the open door through which the two men had disappeared, then talking aloud to himself, he murmured:

"Why did I do that?"

The sound of his voice breaking on the silence of the room recalled him to himself. A deep sigh heaved his bosom. Slowly he walked back to the table. The paper on the floor caught his eye. He stooped, picked it up and looked once more at the smiling face looking back at him amid the printed lines. Long he gazed, then his hand crushed the paper and he cast it from him as though it were some vile, living thing he was hurling out of his life forever.

"As fair as she is false! No wonder men love and trust her!" he muttered bitterly.

CHAPTER VII.

A BLOODLESS BATTLE.

"Are those cigars ready?" These words, spoken back of him, caused Fighting Horace to turn with a start.

He found himself face to face with Blackrock the half-breed. At the first glance a light of recognition flashed in the eyes of both, and their hands went out at the same time, each clasping the other heartily.

"Blackrock!"

"Horace!"

The two names were spoken simultaneously, showing that the pleasure of the meeting was mutual. After a long hand-clasp, Horace remarked in thoughtful sadness:

"It's almost three years since you did me the unkindness of saving my life."

Blackrock looked up with startled eyes, which, taking in at a glance the stern and bitter lines on the bronze face before him to assert rather than question:

"You wanted to die?"

"Yes," admitted Horace, without further explanation.

"I am sorry I saved you then."

The way those words were spoken showed that the half-breed could understand what it meant to be tired of life. It was Horace's turn to be startled, for he asked anxiously:

"What's the matter, Blackrock? You don't seem yourself."

A frown contracted Blackrock's brow, his eyes narrowed so that only a cruel glimmer passed the lowered lids, but his voice was cold and calm as he answered:

"Remember Piokee? Some white man take her from me. She has disappeared."

Unconsciously the half-breed had fallen back into the uneducated way of talking of his uncivilized brothers. The Princeton graduate had disappeared; it was the primitive man who had been robbed of his mate. Horace was in the right mood to understand the other's feelings, for he broke forth bitterly:

"So they are all alike—white or red—they are false, corrupt, untrue!"

Blackrock stopped him.

"You are mistaken, Horace. I do not blame Piokee, I blame the man!"

Farther comment was interrupted by Paradise Lost and his companions entering the inn. The Texas Ranger rushed forward on spying Horace, calling to the others, and seizing Horace's hand, he pumped it up and down while crushing it in his, saying:

"Ah, there, you son-of a-gun!"

"Glad to see you Milton," smiled Horace, somewhat touched by the sincere affection of this rough, unaffected heart.

"Couldn't be any gladder than me," admitted the man beamingly, "but I guess I'd better let the boys have a chance at your paw or they'll be starting something."

Paradise Lost moved back and the others rushed forward, and a general handshaking followed. Blackrock had moved back to the cigar counter, and ringing the bell, had called Ralph to the room, the innkeeper being followed by Sallie and Lola, who, hearing the sound of voices, had guessed that Fighting Horace's interview with Captain Wilbur must be at an end. The half-breed had paid for his order and with the cigar boxes and packages of tobacco securely fastened together, had left the inn and returned to camp.

When Sallie had entered the room she had guessed at a glance that as yet no one had told Horace of Touch-me-not's threat. Calling Paradise Lost to her she asked anxiously:

"Haven't you told him about Touch-me-not?"

"I just found him. He had left the Munger before we got there and we've been having a merry time trying to find him."

"Well, now that you have, you'd better get a move on you. Don't you see it's ten minutes to five?"

"All right," answered Paradise Lost, then advancing toward the group formed around Horace, he announced, as all faces went grave at the remembrance of the danger menacing the smiling man: "Horace, I've something to tell you."

"I'm listening," with a surprised accent in the voice.

"You've sure enlisted in the Rough Riders?"

"Yes?" and Horace cast a questioning look around him.

"Well, that old varmint of a Touch-me-not says he's going to make you resign before five o'clock today or make you take the consequence."

Fighting Horace squared his shoulders, his nostrils expanded, his eyes flashed. Like a war horse at the sound of the call to battle, the fighter in him had awakened to life. Calmly but resolutely he announced:

"Well, boys, you know I will not resign."

"That's the stuff! What are you going to do?" asked Paradise.

"Wait for him here. Now, boys, I wish to be alone; so go to the bar, order drinks for everybody on me and be sure that there is one extra glass for Touch-me-not and one for me."

"Then there won't be a killing!" cried Lola in sudden relief.

"I think not."

"But is it safe for you to meet him alone? Remember what he is," remarked Sallie, anxiously.

"I know him better than you, my good Sallie. This will not be my first encounter with him, but as this is my fight I intend fighting it as I see fit."

"All right, Horace, but if he does you any dirt there'll be a hanging bee with a Touch-me-not buzzer at the end of the rope," and leading the way, Paradise Lost disappeared into the bar-room followed by the men.

Sallie, in spite of the fact that the rude life of the plains had hardened her, was enough of a woman to hesitate about leaving a man, and that man a friend, alone to defend himself against so desperate a character as Touch-me-not, the most notoriously bad man of three states. As for Lola, she was crying from excitement and fright. Horace pleaded with them to leave, then, seeing they still clung to him, he pointed grimly to the clock.

"Only five minutes, and he'll sure be on time. Do you want me shot down without a chance to defend my life?" he asked.

This decided Sallie, for pulling the still weeping Lola after her, she ordered her husband: "come along, Horace is right. We'd be in the way."

Ralph did not wait for a second order, glad as he was that his willful wife had not insisted on his remaining to risk his life to save Horace's. The three had barely disappeared when Colorado Joe, Nevada Pete, and other ranchmen, entered to announce that Touch-me-not was on his way to the inn.

After a second's parley, Fighting Horace had forced the newcomers to join the others in the bar room. Then leisurely he drew his gun, examined it with care, and, satisfied, he walked back to the cigar counter and stooping behind it, waited. A cuckoo, in the old fashioned clock on the wall, came out and sang five times. Not a sound came from the barroom. It seemed as though the men assembled there were holding their breath as they crowded near the swinging doors and gazed anxiously into the other room. Down the street Touch-me-not was coming, his hand on his gun, his eyes enflamed by drink. He was a living type of creeping death. Just drunk enough to be desperate, he was still sober enough to shoot staight. Woe to the one who should have to face the half-drawn gun. He passed by the glass front of the inn, looking around in all directions, ready to whirl and fire. He paused for a second in the open doorway, looking suspiciously into the empty room. A murmur of voices, coming from the bar as the men behind the door caught sight of him, caused him to enter. His would-be victim was surely in there.

"Hey, it's five o'clock! Has he resigned?"

Fighting Horace rose from behind the counter and taking the drop on his enemy, ordered calmly:

"Put up that gun!"

Touch-me-not turned with an oath, his gun drawn on Horace but he did not attempt to fire. The glitter of the cold steel within ten feet of him, the determination of the cold eyes fixing his, showed him the folly of rebellion. He was caught in his own trap.

Still he hesitated to obey.

"I hold the better hand, Touch-me-not, don't force me to play it. Put up that gun!"

Pale with rage, the bully stood his ground. Though he knew it was certain death to disobey, yet he was too proud to yield immediately.

"Come, be reasonable. I haven't time to waste."

The impatient tones with which this sentence was uttered showed Touch-me-not he had to obey. With a muttered curse and a murderous flash of the eye, he replaced his gun. Horace, still keeping him under cover, came from behind the counter, as calm and collected as though he were advancing for an ordinary greeting.

"Now, let us talk!"

"The only way I want to talk is with my gun," snarled the man.

"You shall have the chance later," assured Horace.

"Why not now?"

"Because neither of our lives belong to us any more. You can not take mine any more than I can risk taking yours; we both belong to our country. If either or both of us must die, it must be for the glory of our flag. For that reason do I refuse to fight you. Until the war is over, we must be friends."

"Friends!" and Touch-me-not stared at Horace as though he thought he had lost his reason.

"Yes, friends, comrades. This truce must last as long as our country needs us, after that, if we live to see that day, you will become for me the outlaw you really are and I shall become once more the officer of the law. Here is my hand in sign of friendship."

For a second Touch-me-not hesitated, then slowly he clasped the extended hand, saying:

"Only until after the war."

"You have my word." Then, replacing his gun, Horace fearlessly lead the way into the bar, saying: "The boys are waiting, the drinks are on me. Come."

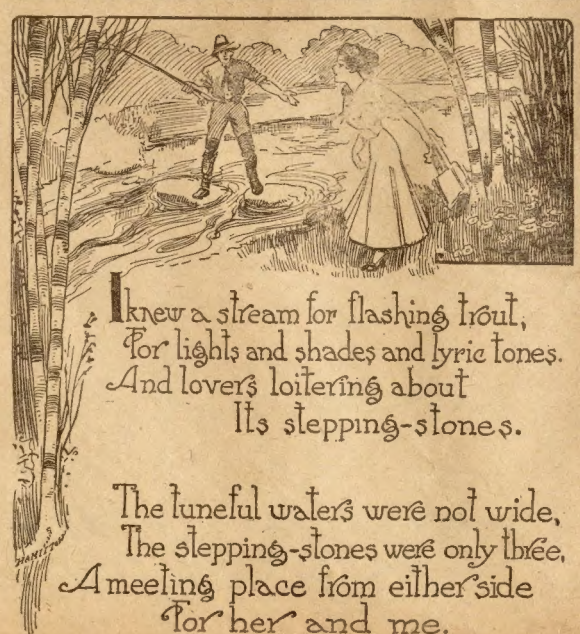
CHAPTER VIII.

TAMPA.

During the rest of the stay of the Rough Riders in San Antonio, Fighting Horace and Touch-me-not met frequently in maneuvers or at camp. Horace always spoke pleasantly, but the other answered with sullen politeness. The truce was on but the feud was not ended. Touch-me-not soon took the leadership of all the bad element of the regiment, while Fighting Horace gained an almost absolute control of the better element. With the exception of the superior officers, nearly everybody in the regiment knew of the quarrel between the two men, and every time the demands of the service forced them together, their actions were watched and noted with interest.

Then came the orders to break camp and rejoin the other troops at Tamap. In the new camp of the Florida city the two men were brought less in contact than in San Antonio, and after a time the interest in the quarrel existing between the two subsided, and finally only the intimates of both remembered it. Thus passed the days.

For several weeks before the final orders to move to the front were issued, the Tampa Bay Hotel, headquarters of the commanders in chief of the army, was the center of ceaseless gayety. With death lurking near, it seemed as if all those young and dashing officers wanted to enjoy all the pleasures of life. Wives and sweethearts had come to bid farewell to the departing men, and night after night in the whirl of the dance, beneath the glare of light, the worried, aching hearts of the women in light summery dresses and men in brilliant


I knew a stream for flashing trout,
For lights and shades and lyric tones.
And lovers loitering about
Its stepping-stones.
The tuneful waters were not wide,
The stepping-stones were only three,
A meeting place from either side
For her and me.

uniforms, while in the gardens were promenading couples, talking in low voices, unfortunate lovers who dreaded the separation which might be eternal.

Captain Wilbur was seated by a garden table at the foot of the veranda, in front of him was the reporter, Bates, while before each man was a tall cool glass of mint julep. The sunset glow which had followed the oppressive heat of the day cast a dreamy haze over the landscape. From the hotel drawing-room, the windows of which stood wide open, came the exquisite notes of a woman's voice, singing to piano and harp accompaniment. The spell of the voice caused all conversation to cease. A dreamy look had stolen into the young captain's eyes, his lips half-opened in a smile. Bates, keeping time to the music watched with amusement the officer's face. A burst of applause greeted the close of the song.

"Who was that singing?" asked Bates of his still abstracted companion.

"Mrs. Culbert," answered Wilbur with a start.

Bates laughed. "No wonder you looked so dreamy," he said.

Wilbur scarcely heard the remark; he was following his thoughts. Suddenly he remarked, leaning forward across the table and lowering his voice:

"I can't understand how her divorced husband dared accuse her that way. Her very face says it is a lie!"

"He had to give some excuse for his desertion. Nobody blames a man for leaving a faithless wife."

"Now that you know her, aren't you glad I stopped you from sending that infamous lie to your paper?"

Bates took a sip from his glass, then answered slowly:

"As a man I am glad, as a reporter I regret it. I could have followed the clue and I am sure I could have unearthed a good story. It would have gotten more out of Fighting Horace than you did, for I suppose he still refuses to tell you any more?"

"He does. He says he will only tell me of her husband's whereabouts when he is sure that I really intend to marry her."

Here the two men were interrupted by a messenger boy riding up to them on his wheel and asking:

"General Shafter, please?"

"In there, my boy," answered the captain, pointing to the hotel, "that colored man in the doorway will show you the way." Then calling, "Eh, Williams, show the boy the general's room."

Bates had risen on seeing the boy. The reporter, ever on the alert, felt that perhaps the messenger was bringing some important news. He must be near to watch the resulting orders and from these orders draw his own conclusions. With a hurried excuse about some letters to write, Bates hastened away after the messenger. Captain Wilbur smiled. He had seen through the blind excuse. Suddenly his attention was attracted by the unusual actions of a Rough Rider creeping among the cluster of trees to the left of the veranda. For a time the captain watched him. Twilight had settled rapidly and in the dusk he could not see the man's features, yet something in the creeping walk struck him as familiar. In the hotel the lights were suddenly turned on, casting a glow of light through the open doors and windows and dispersing the gloom for yards around. The man's face was now unexpectedly lit up. He tried to retreat, but the captain, seeing and recognizing him, had leaped to his feet with the exclaimation:

"Blackrock!"

The halfbreed turned at that name and fell immediately in the position for the salute. Answering the salute, Captain Wilbur hastened after the man, who tried to hurry on.

"What are you looking for, Blackrock?"

That question caused the Indian to turn anew, and once more his face shone dark and menacing in the light.

"I'm not looking for anything, Captain. "I'm going back to camp."

It was evident the man was lying, and Captain Wilbur, who had known Blackrock at Princeton, where both had attended the same classes, knew that it must be a very powerful reason to cause the halfbreed to thus conceal the truth, he who had never been caught in a falsehood before. Gently he said:

"Tom, your actions belie your words. You are not telling the truth. Can't I help you, in remembrance of the college days at Princeton?"

Blackrock's eyes narrowed, his lips became set as he answered:

"If you remember those days, Wilbur, you must also remember that I always stood alone."

"You certainly were a solitary fellow." Bitterly the other answered, years of suffering and repression breaking forth in the spoken words:

"Could it be otherwise? I abandoned my own people yet I remained an alien to the whites. Education cut me from my race and my color and origin stood between me and my intellectual equals."

"You're too sensitive, Tom. You don't understand our ways."

Frowning Blackrock answered darkly: "I fear I understand them too well."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Goodby, I must go."

Captain Wilbur stopped him. "Blackrock, I don't like the expression of your face."

"It must be then that I am more Indian than white man tonight."

Anxiously Captain Wilbur asked: "Won't you tell me? I might help you."

"No one can help me now; it is too late." Then suddenly pointing to the left, "What's Touch-me-not doing over there with your man Corley?"

Captain Wilbur turned surprised. Just outside of the park, in the dim light of dusk, two figures were plainly visible, but his eyes, less sharp than those of the halfbreed, could only see a man in the Rough Riders' uniform and another in civilian clothes.

"Are you sure it is they?"

"Certain. No one wears his hat at just such an angle. It's Touch-me-not all right. See, he is giving a letter to the colored man."

"A letter?"

"Yes, it must no doubt be for you; gooby," and profiting by the Captain's abstraction, the halfbreed hurried away without having betrayed his secret.

CHAPTER IX.

SUSPICION.

Captain Wilbur was scarcely conscious of Blackrockk's departure, so occupied was he in watching the actions of his colored servant and the noted bad man of the regiment, Touch-me-not. After

"Put up that gun!"

a time Corley returned toward the hotel, passing the waiting captain with a bow and an uneasy smile. Wilbur, frowning, stopped the black man with the question:

"Any message for me, Corley?"

"No sah," answered George Washington, as he tried to hurry on, but Captain Wilbur barred the way.

"I thought I saw Touch-me-not give you a letter?"

A mad terror cast a glimmer of white over the shining black face, while the man's eyes rolled around him with a frightened glance.

"Why this silence? Speak out!" ordered the captain impatiently. "Didn't he give you a letter?"

"Yes, sah, but, sah, he told me he'd skin me alive if I told you sah. And, sah, I fear trouble cause ob that there black cat that went and crossed my path just this minute."

"Give me that letter."

"But sah, he said I wasn't to let you see it," pleaded the colored boy with chattering teeth.

"All the more reason why I should see it. That man isn't to be trusted. The letter at once!"

"But, sah, I don't want to be skinned alive, sah!"

"Don't be a fool, Corley. If you don't obey me I'll have the letter taken from you then have you thrown in the guard house."

Reluctantly George give up the letter, as he murmured piteously: "Oh, dat black cat!"

Bringing the letter within the circle of light coming from the windows of the hotel Captain Wilbur was able to read the superscription:

"Mrs. Horace Culbert. Important."

A sudden pang of jealousy, of suspicion, caused the captain's heart to cease its beating, only to leap in disordered palpitation the next minute. His voice was low and hoarse as he asked:

"You say he cautioned you to give it to her without my knowledge?"

"Yes, sah." Looking around uneasily.

For a second a terrible temptation assailed the young man. He toyed with the mysterious letter, a mad desire to know the truth causing him to wish there were some means whereby he could open the letter without bemeaning himself. Then suddenly, afraid to trust himself longer he thrust the letter in the hands of the astonished Corley with the corupt order:

"Deliver the letter at once and don't tell Mrs. Culbert that I saw it."

"Yes, sah," and the negro hurried off greatly relieved.

As he was disappearing in the hotel Captain Wilbur, turning moodily toward the gate, saw Paradise Lost coming toward him. With a gathering frown he paused and waited for the former Texas Ranger to reach him. As the newcomer paused for the salute, Wilbur asked sternly:

"What are you doing here? You are the third Rough Rider I've seen tonight. Has the whole regiment been given a leave of absence?"

Paradise Lost saluted again as he answered: "Don't know about the others Captain, I'm sent by Colonel Roosevelt with a message to General Shafter."

"Very well, take it to him."

Wilbur continued his way, and passing by a rustic bench, he sank on it, then lighting a cigar lost himself in his gloomy thoughts. Every one of Fighting Horace's words returned to him and an awful, heart-breaking suspicion stole over him. Was that story true? Why should this Touch-me-not write her? What was that man to her?

Meanwhile Paradise Lost had reached the hotel when he came face to face with the reporter Bates, who was descending the steps with the departing messenger boy.

"Why, it's Paradise!" exclaimed Bates, extending his hand.

"Glad to see you, sir," replied the elder man, as he vigorously shook the extended hand.

"How's your friend, Colorado Jack?"

"Colorado Joe, you mean?"

"Oh, yes," laughed the New Yorker, "you fellows have such queer names. It's hard to remember all. I suppose you have a reason for each nickname?"

"Bet your life; Joe's called Colorado Joe 'cause he hails from there."

"Then why are you called Paradise Lost?"

"Because my last name is Milton, and some wise guy pretends that a chap by that there name wrote a lot of dope about how Paradise got lost or some such stuff. I don't just remember."

"Oh, I see," laughed Bates, both interested and amused. "Have you boys heard from Lola and the others at San Antonio?"

"Me and Joe got a letter apiece from Lola," admitted the other proudly.

"Only one? Why, I'm ahead of you. She wrote me three!"

"I told Colorado Joe that's what'd happen. Girls never know what's good for them. But I've got to be going," and Paradise Lost, disgusted with his luck, tried to pass Robert who still remained standing on the lower steps of the stairs.

"Where are you going?"

"Bring a message from the Colonel to General Shafter."

Linking his arm in that of Paradise Lost, Bates said, "I'll show you the way," then, as they walked on, he continued with an assumed unconcern so as not to arouse his companion's suspicions, "What did you say that message was?"

"Simply wants to know if the General will see Colonel Roosevelt this evening."

Meanwhile Captain Wilbur had remained lost in his meditation. His cigar had gone out but he was not conscious of it, so great was his abstraction. Suddenly he returned to reality. The colored boy Corley was hurrying past him evidently wishing to pass by unnoticed. Rising hurriedly, Wilbur asked:

"Where are you going now, Corley?"

"I'm going to bring the answer, sah?"

"She sent an answer?" There was more pain than astonishment in the question.

"Yes, sah."

"Are you going to take it to camp?"

"No sah; Mr. Touch-me-not is waiting for me outside the grounds, sah."

"Very well, go on," and Wilbur sank back on the bench, biting his cigar in two in the effort he made to control the impulse which seized him to take that letter himself to the waiting man and obtain an explanation by force if need be.

The merry groups on the veranda had disappeared as the sound of an orchestra stole into the night, announcing the dinner hour.

"Want to join us?" asked a voice by Captain Wilbur's side which called him for the second time from his painful meditation.

Looking up, Wilbur saw Bates and Paradise Lost standing before him. Rising in answer to the salute of his man, he asked: "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to meet Colonel Roosevelt, who's on his way to join General Shafter. Won't be surprised if there be something doing pretty soon."

"Sorry, but I can't go. It's the dinner hour, for I hear the orchestra and I promised Mrs. Culbert to dine with her tonight."

"Then I won't insist. Come along, Paradise."

The two men disappeared into the night, leaving Captain Wilbur standing motionless at the same place. After a time, the young man gave a movement of impatience, murmuring half-aloud:

"I'm a fool!"

CHAPTER X.

JUNE.

While Captain Wilbur was indulging in the bitterness of his newly awakened suspicions, Mrs. Culbert was waiting for him in the hotel parlor. Beneath the blaze of lights in the vast room, her delicate beauty appeared at splendid advantage, causing all passersby to turn unconsciously for a second glance at the girlish figure seated on a low divan by the piano. She wore a simple evening gown, which brought out the shapely contour of her graceful figure, the white arms and shoulders glimmering white and perfect against the dark background of the walls. Still, something in the discouraged pose of the body and in the sad, faraway look of the eyes, spoke of a sorrow bravely repressed. Those who knew the history of the beautiful divorcee, did not wonder so much as did strangers who could not see what cause for sorrow such a rich, beautiful and much admired woman could possibly have. For that reason many thought that this subtle shade of sadness was simply an added coquettry of a pretty woman. Mrs. Culbert had remained for some time lost in a maze of her thoughts, when she was suddenly recalled to herself by some one asking:

"Are you coming to dinner?"

She looked up with a start and saw before her one of her friends, the young wife of an officer in the regulars. Looking around she saw the parlors were emptied of their chattering groups, while the sound of the orchestra reached her for the first time.

"I am waiting for Captain Wilbur," she answered hastily.

"And I am waiting for my husband. Those army men are not as punctual as they might be," remarked her friend, then, as she caught sight of an officer in full uniform coming toward her, she added as she advanced to meet him, "Here he is. Will see you later, June."

Mrs. Culbert, finding herself alone, rose from her seat and walked out on the veranda in search of Wilbur. Not finding him there, she descended the steps, calling:

"Al, Al."

Wilbur started to his feet at the sound of her voice and she saw him. Advancing, she asked:

"Aren't you coming to dinner, Al?"

Moodily he answered, angry that her first words had not been to tell him about that mysterious letter, received earlier in the evening:

"I'm not hungry, better go in without me tonight."

She started uneasily, a sudden fear leaping in her eyes. She placed one small hand on his arm, looking up anxiously to his face, hoping to catch on the frowning brow a glimpse of the thoughts within.

"Are you ill?" Though she questioned thus, she was sure that something beside illness had changed the young man, and her woman's instinct told her that that something referred to her and to that letter of which she could not and dared not speak.

"Not at all," came his answer, more moody than ever.

"Then what's the matter?"

"Nothing, I assure you. I'm not hungry that's all. Don't mind me, I sometimes have these spells."

Determined to know all, and set her growing fears at rest, June insisted:

"You can't deceive me, Albert; I have noticed a change in you since your return from Texas, and that change being more noticeable than usual, tonight, I must ask its cause. Why don't you have more confidence in me?"

"I might say the same to you."

"What do you mean?" and June looked up with a start at the dark face above her, which the light from the plaza brought into bold relief.

"Your start and the anxious look of your eyes tells me you know what I mean," answered the man, more and more suspicious.

"I—I—don't understand you," she stammered, though her emotion and the sudden pallor of her face belied the spoken words.

Captain Wilbur hesitated for the space of a second, then said hurriedly:

"I assure you it was by the merest accident that I learned that the most notoriously bad man in my regiment has sent you a letter, and that you have answered that letter."

Mrs. Culbert's cheek flamed red, her eyes snapped fire, and the tones of her voice as she answered had a bitterness Wilbur had never heard before.

"I suppose you want me to show you that letter and to tell you my answer?" she said.

He drew nearer, seized her hand in both of his and pleaded:

"You will let me see it, June? Say that you will to set my fears at rest!"

She withdrew her hand and moved back a few steps, the hot blood of anger, leaving her cheeks, left her face white and wan, while the momentary bitterness of voice was now replaced by a note of sadness as she answered slowly, her eyes fixed on his:

"If I were to tell you that that letter is one I can show to no one, that it contains a secret I can reveal to no one, would you still insist on seeing it?"

"You will not say that! You will take pity upon me and not leave me in this agony of doubt?"

He had seized her hands again but she pulled them away once more, hurt by his insistance, which showed how little he trusted her.

"So you're like the other," was her sad comment. "You do not trust the woman you claim to love. Are all men alike, always doubting, never sure?"

Gravely he replied: "A man doesn't suspect a woman unless her actions give him the right to do so."

A sudden rebellion against the injustice of it all came to her, and she cried: "Then I haven't the right to receive a letter, I haven't the right to speak to another man, without showing that letter, without giving a detailed account of that conversation?"

"Simply tell me why he writes you. I will take your word for it," pleaded the captain.

"I can not tell you. You must trust me without knowing."

"How can I trust you, you who have—" He came to an abrupt pause, suddenly conscious that he was about to insult this woman he so deeply loved.

But she had guessed the unfinished thought, and livid, with heaving bosom and eyes misty with bravely repressed tears, she ordered in calm despair:

"Why don't you finish?"

He guessed what she was suffering, the change on the sensitive face was so marked, and repentant, ashamed of himself, suffering as much as she, he pleaded:

"Pardon me, June, my insane jealously makes me say things I should not even think."

"I know your thought, Al. How can you trust a woman whose husband deserted her as mine did, I certainly ask too much to be trusted by you or any one else."

"If you only knew what he claims."

In one leap she was by his side, her breath coming in uneven gasps, her eyes large and dark with emotion, then in choked, hoarse tones, she asked:

"You have met him?"

"What have I said?"

"Answer me, have you two met?"

"No but I——" he paused embarrassed, frightened by her emotion.

"You what?" she insisted. "Albert Wilbur, you've said too much now, you must finsh, I must know; do you hear, I must!"

Never had she been so beautiful, the combined emotions that were swaying her to the very soul, lent to her face, her voice, her quivering form, something uncanny and grand in one, something that caused Wilbur to say in low, abashed tones:

"I can't, it would break your heart!"

A nervous, half-hysterical laugh answered him, then she said bitterly:

"Have no fear, hearts are not as brittle as people think, otherwise mine would have been broken long ago. Answer me."

"I can't."

Shaking his arm in a frenzy of suspense and suffering, she ordered in tones that brooked no refusal.

"You must!"

Still he hesitated but a commanding flash from her eyes, forced him to stammer: "I—I met a man in San Antonio who claims to know your former husband intimately."

He paused, unable to continue, knowing well that his next words would bring to the quivering woman before him a suffering which he now felt unmerited. This soft-eyed girl could never have been or done what her former husband claimed. But she would not let him pause, he must finish.

"Well?" she demanded, then seeing he did not answer, she added in imperious command, "Speak, I tell you I can stand anything!"

"This man claims that your—your husband left you because——" the words were choking him.

"Because I had a lover?" she finished, suddenly cold and calm. "I thought so!"

He opened his mouth to speak, to assure her he did not believe the lie, but she did not give him the chance, asking in even almost indifferent tones:

"Where is this man? What is he called?"

"He's a Rough Rider and goes under the name of Fighting Horace," answered Wilbur, unable to withstand the command of her tones.

June had started at the name, and with an anxious, an unreasoned suspicion playing with her heart strings, she asked:

"Tell me, what does he look like?"

Captain Wilbur opened his mouth to answer when the sound of footsteps on the graveled path caused him to turn. Colonel Roosevelt and the reporter were advancing toward them. Wilbur saluted, while June moved a little further in the shadows that the newcomers might not see the emotion on her face.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this strange story. You will find it strong and captivating to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

People Who Never Lived.

An enthusiast's dictionary of the novels of Sir Walter Scott informs us that there are no less than 2,836 characters in his stories. These figures serve to make us realize how surpassingly large is the circle of purely imaginative acquaintances whose names and characteristics and stories the lover of literature and art stores in his memory in the course of a lifetime, and how cosmopolitan the company is.

In infancy we are introduced to the early racial circle of acquaintances whom we inherit from our earliest ancestors—fairies good and wicked, heroes of many climes, imaginary people whom we never forget, and do not allow to be forgotten by those who come after us. Then follow the giants of childhood—Robinson Crusoe, Christian the Pilgrim, Don Quixote, Gulliver. Passing acquaintances, once liked, but readily forgotten, we pass over. And now the circle widens suddenly. The companions of a lifetime come trooping out of past and present—Homer's heroes and heroines, King Arthur's court, Canterbury pilgrims, Shakespeare's immortal company, a few of George Eliot's characters, Dickens' unforgettable types, and from abroad, Dumas' swashbucklers, Balzac's crowded human comedy, some of Daudet's personages, Tolstoy's Anna, Kipling's Soldiers Three and jungliefolks, Hester Prynne, Meredith's great creations, Anatole France's M. Bergeret and his contemporaries.

His Just Reward.

"Wash yourself up, Karl, and comb your hair; pull your necktie 'round straight, and run over to the mayor's house. Be sure you wipe your boots before you go in, and then tell him I send my compliments, and that there's a lot of smoke coming out of the roof of his house!"

He is the meat man in a street grocery. Besides being handy at trimming spare ribs with a safety razor he is also an adept with carpenters' tools. About a year ago he decided to build a kitchen cabinet for his wife. He chose the basement as the place of construction, ordered a lot of lumber and other accessories and went to work.

The only time he had to give to the kitchen cabinet cause was on Sunday, as he had to work early and late during the week. He closed all basement windows tightly in order to muffle all the noise he made with saws and hammers. He even had a set of signals arranged with his wife that she was to stamp on the floor when the minister or some pious friend was passing. Sunday after Sunday he toiled away on the kitchen cabinet, picturing in his mind how pretty and how useful it would be in the kitchen.

Finally the cabinet was finished and the builder asked two or three of the boys at the store to drop over on Sunday morning and help him carry it upstairs. The boys, anxious to see the product of so many days of toil, accepted the invitation and went over. It was a Jim Dandy kitchen cabinet. It was the best ever—even better than the store kind.

"Well, boys, let's hike upstairs with it," said Fritz, the cabinet constructor.

The boys took hold, tilted it and started for the stairway. Fritz groaned. The boys smothered a laugh.

It was nine inches too wide for the stairway.

The cabinet has departed this life via the furnace. It is unlikely that Fritz will build another.

Square Pies?

"I find in a newspaper," said Mr. Oldsome, according to the New York Sun, "an advertisement of a griddle to cook square pancakes. I never before heard of a square pancake, but I distinctly remember that in my youth in my home we had square pies. If you've heard of square pies choke me off right here, but if you haven't you might like to.

"Square pies were not exactly square; they were baked in straight side oblong tins that were square cornered. The pies baked in such tins were always either pumpkin or custard, never mince or apple or any sort of pie with works that were chopped or otherwise of such nature that they would easily fall out when a piece of pie was lifted.

"These square pies used to cut six or eight pieces to the pie. You cut first straight down the length of the tin from end to end in the middle and then you cut across either two or three times. This gave you either six or eight pieces in a pie, according to the number of crosscuts you made, the pieces being each square and all of approximately the same size. But obviously the corner pieces had twice as much crust as the inside pieces. This, however, was not a disadvantage, for some people like more filling, some like more crust. I always used to ask for a corner piece."

Stunt That Failed.

Every little bit of business has a meaning all its own upon the stage. The slightest change in a given action may result in a failure "to get across." Miss Mary Irwin was explaining this fact the other day as she waited for the curtain to go up on her latest success. "You've got to work these things out with care," she said. "You remember that scene in which I drink tea out of a saucer in this show? Well, that killed 'em dead everywhere we went. People used to go into hysterics. The action was always delayed, so that we counted on it. We had to frame up something to do while that torrent of laughter poured over the house.

"We were on the 'dog trip,' trying the play out on the small towns, when we struck a little burg up the State. I came on, went through my usual stunts and finally began to drink tea out of a saucer. No one laughed. No one even cracked a smile. They all sat there as quiet as a bunch of deaf mute undertakers holding a lodge of sorrow. I couldn't understand it at all, and that night after the show was over I asked the house manager:

"'Why didn't the audience laugh when I drank tea out of a saucer?'

"'And why,' said he, 'should they laugh? Ain't that the way you always drink it?'"

One on the Host.

A distinguished jurist in Washington dined recently with a family there who are ardent advocates of a vegetarian diet. During the dinner, which consisted of all the delicacies of plant life then in season, the host undertook the conversion of his meat-eating guest. Notwithstanding his arguments, which were cleverly based on the chemical constituents of various kinds of food, the jurist remained unconvinced.

"But, sir," urged his host, "you must admit that vegetarianism means strength and ability when you remember that the rabbit, which feeds wholly on vegetables, can make such great leaps over the ground from hiding place to hiding place."

"True," answered the jurist, gravely, "but we must also remember that the minute creature for which naturalists claim the ability to jump more times its own length than any other belongs in the class of pure carnivora."

An Unruly Patient.

Expecting a patient in the medical ward of a local hospital one evening recently, one of the nurses told an orderly to be on the watch for the man, and to get him undressed and into bed.

Soon afterward a man came into the room and stood looking about him.

"You may sit here," said the orderly, going up to the man and pointing to a chair beside a bed.

Then the orderly brought a screen and placed it about the newcomer. "The nurse said you were to undress," the attendant remarked.

"But I don't want to undress," said the man.

"Oh, but you must," replied the orderly, "a bed is all ready for you."

"I will not undress and you can't make me undress," exclaimed the man.

"O, that's all right," soothingly answered the orderly, who thought the case must be one of mental disorder, "we'll soon fix you all right," and he stooped down to unfasten the man's shoes.

In the struggle that followed the "patient" managed to tear himself loose and jump to his feet.

"What'n three kind o' blue blazes am I up against?" he yelled; "I didn't come here for this kind of treatment; I came here to see a sick friend."

"Oh, what a cunning mustache!"

"Well, don't knock it while it's down."

Was He Sarcastic?

"John, we have been married for nearly twenty years. I want you to tell me something."

"Oh, yes, Mary, you look just as young and girlish as you did the first time I ever saw you; I have learned to love you more and more as the years have drifted by; I wouldn't be free again if I had a chance; if you were to die I shouldn't think of marrying any other woman, but I'd spend the rest of my life pining for you; I admit that your family is much superior to mine; I realize that I never should have amounted to anything if it had not been for your influence; you are the best manager I ever saw; your new spring hat is very becoming; you look 15 years younger than Mrs. Branthwaite; yes, I like very much the way you are wearing your hair; I think of you steadily all day; I am sure that any young woman who would look at me twice would do so only because she wished to make a fool of me, and I acknowledge that you make a much better showing than any other woman could make on our income. Now is there anything else? I'm in a good deal of a hurry this morning."

One on Brown.

Brown is a traveling man. He has a little 3-year-old who has just learned to say her prayers. Every Sunday Brown gets home for a few hours, but this is about all the time he has with his family.

Consequently, the little girl is not as well acquainted, perhaps, as she might be with his relation to the family, although she thinks him very nice because of the candy and presents he brings to her.

Mrs. Brown, in teaching the child its prayers, of course, taught her to ask a blessing for "papa" along with "mamma" and "grandma" and "grandpa" and the other persons the child knows well. She was much surprised the other night when the child, at the end of "Now I lay me," recited the remainder of the prayer like this:

"God bless papa, mamma, grandma, Willie and that man who comes to see mamma every Sunday and brings me such nice things."

A Laudable Object.

When Sir Thomas Lipton was an industrious but far from wealthy young man in this country he had an experience with a burglar.

He was awakened one night by the consciousness that there was a stranger in his room.

"Who's that?" he demanded, sitting up in bed.

"Sh-h-h!" exclaimed the burglar. "Don't move, or I'll shoot. I'm looking for money!"

"Wait a minute," said Lipton calmly. "I'll get up and help you."

Little Stories

FIRST LOVE.

I really think she's awfly nice;
I like her coy and winning way.
I can't forget her beaming smile—
And that is why I write this lay.

Her cheeks are of the prettiest pink,
Her lips are of the finest red;
I like the way she wears her hair,
On the top of her shapely head.

I hardly know just why I like
This girl with ways so sweet and true.
So I will keep this secret still,
And I will tell not even you.

And do you know what I should do
If she should scorn my fervent cries?
I think I'd go and drown myself
In the deep blue seas in her eyes.

"Hey, Pop, stop eating! The Anti-Noise Society cop is down stairs."

HELP WANTED.

Any of our readers wishing a government position, should send postal immediately to Franklin Institute, Dept. L-80, Rochester, N. Y., for full list of positions open. This list shows the salaries, the duties and tells how to get the positions.

Art of Smiling.

Why is it that most people, as they walk along the streets or ride in the cars, have such an unpleasant expression? If one will observe even casually the people he meets in a day he will be impressed with the pained and sullen and disagreeable countenances. We live in a rush, and the average person is bent on some errand or business, and is absorbed in that; we are all rushing to get something or somewhere. With this absorbing our attention, we haven't time to attend to our facial expression. We are not sure, however, that this is a matter of permissible indifference. If one does not believe that his countenance adds to or detracts anything from the lives or expressions of others, let him pause for a moment before that now celebrated "Billiken." It is almost impossible to look at the little imp and not smile. The Japanese teach their maids in the hotels, and those in higher walks of life, the art of smiling. They are compelled to practice before a mirror. One cannot stay long in Japan without being inoculated with the disposition to "look pleasant." The "look pleasant, please," of the photographer goes deeper than the photograph plate.

No one wants to associate long with an animated vinegar cruet. A disposition is easily guessed from the angle of the corners of the mouth; a disposition is moulded by compelling those angles to turn up or down. If a merry heart maketh a glad countenance, it is also true that a glad countenance makes a merry heart—in the one who has it and in the one who beholds. "Iron sharpeneth iron. So a bad man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

Always Plague in China.

There are about 1,000 American missionaries in the two provinces in China, Chefoo and Shantung, where the bubonic plague is raging, and about 250 more in the districts affected by the famine, the Milwaukee Sentinel observes. Secretaries of American missionary societies having work in these provinces, and which sent out workers, have notified the relatives in this country, in so far as they are known, that in the judgment of the societies missionaries and their families have little to fear.

The secretaries point to the fact that plagues of various kinds rage in China nearly all the time and that to recall workers when one breaks out would be to disarrange the work nearly all of the time. Besides, say the secretaries, missionaries would not come home at this time were they ordered to do so.

An American physician, trusted by the Chinese officials and prominent in Peking since the plague, is a woman, Dr. Minnie Stryker, first sent by the Congregationalists, but now working under direction of the Methodist women of America. Reports of her usefulness at this time throw honor upon those who are supporting her. She is a native of Flemington, N. J., and a graduate of Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, class of 1894. She took her medical course at the Women's College in Philadelphia and went to China under the American board in 1900.

All Loss and No Gain.

Speaker Cannon at a banquet had been criticising a political opponent.

"His advocacy of these measures is only half-hearted anyway," the speaker said. "It is as half-hearted as uncle Eli Baxter's affection for his wife.

"Uncle Eli kept a crab and oyster emporium in the village of Doerun. He was rich, according to Doerun standards, and the village gossips said that his wife, a young and pretty woman, had married him for his money.

"A friend, dropping in for a cold boiled crab one morning, noticed that uncle Eli looked woebegone.

"'What the matter, uncle?' he asked. 'Rheumatiz again?'

"'Wuz'n rheumatiz,' said uncle Eli, shortly. 'It's my wife. She's been kissing young lawyer Shyster, what takes his meals here with me.'

"The visitor in amazement dropped the crab claw he had been picking.

"'Impossible!' he cried.

"'Impossible nothin',' said uncle Eli, grimly. 'I seen her do it.'

"The voice of the crab eater quivered with awe and interest.

"'Then what are you goin' to do about it, uncle Eli?' he asked.

"'Do?' said the old man, sourly. 'What can I do? If I let the cat out of the bag that I've lost confidence in lawyer Shyster he's liable to change his eatin' house.'"

The Date of Easter.

There is a movement in progress to minimize the variation in the date of Easter, which causes so much inconvenience every spring. Nearly all of Christendom is agreed upon the necessity of the change, but the way appears to be blocked by Russia, as the greatest power which follows the reckoning of the Greek Church, and has not yet adopted the Gregorian calendar. It is difficult to see what reason there can be why most of the Christian world should wait upon Russia in this matter. The fact that the Greek Church holds aloof would make no difference whatever to the rest of Christendom. When Leo XIII. was Pope, the third Sunday after the spring equinox was accepted in theory as the date of Easter—that is to say, the Sunday nearest to the seventh of April, which was the date of Easter Sunday in A. D. 33. If this proposal were adopted, the variation of the date would be very slight, and would be measured by days, instead of by weeks as at present.

Johnny—Pa, what is a trust?

Professor Broadhead—A trust, my boy, is a large body of wealth entirely surrounded by envy.

Two Canine Prodigies.

Two suburbanites, one living near Morton and the other near Primos, were swapping stories of country life as they went home in the 5:35 o'clock train.

"I have a most intelligent dog," said the Primos man, "I just hand him a letter and say, 'There, Sport!' and off he goes to the postoffice. I gave him one yesterday and he dropped it. He refused to pick it up, but wagged his tail instead. I suspected something wrong and picked up the letter and weighed it. It required two cents more postage."

Without the least show of surprise the man from Morton proceeded with his story.

"Dogs are intelligent," he began. "My collie, Carlo, always posts my letters, and one day he, like your dog, dropped a letter on the floor. I thought possibly one stamp was not enough, but on weighing the letter I found that the postage was all right. I gave it back to Carlo, but he let it fall again to the floor. I inspected the letter carefully and found that it was addressed to South Penn Sq., New York, instead of Philadelphia."

A Kentucky Fantasy.

Bang!

"Under the seat, stranger," cried the Bluegrass man as he slipped to the floor.

Bang! Bang!

"What's wrong?" gasped the stranger.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The train gathered headway.

"Guess we gittin' through all right," quoth the native, as he raised his head.

"Why, what's the trouble?" demanded the other man.

"'Tain't really nothin'," the native explained. "Jest th' boys up 'n th' mountains shootin' at th' train hands. They don't mean no harm."

"But they might kill somebody!"

"Well, yes, they do now an' then. Mebby a couple a day or so."

"Good gracious! Why don't the authorities interfere?"

"'Twouldn't be wuth while. Ef they stopped 'em from shootin' train hands, like as not they'd begin shootin' passengers. Besides, they don't really mean no harm."

And the train rushed on.

Boy—Pop, the soles are all worn off my shoes.

Father—Well?

Boy—Well, if you'd buy me a pair of roller skates I could keep right on wearing these shoes.

Conscience-Stricken.

A haggard man entered the office of the district attorney and waited diffidently for an hour to get a word with him. Finally he obtained audience with the official, who asked him what his business was.

"I've cheated the Government!" whispered the haggard man, nervously fingering the hat in his hands.

"And you want to make restitution?" inquired the district attorney. He had heard of such cases. "How did you cheat the Government—evade the customs duty, or steal something from the mint?"

"No, no, none of those things."

"Did you embezzle from a national bank, perhaps?"

"No; never had anything to do with a national bank."

"Did you overcharge Uncle Sam on a contract?"

"Not that, either."

"Did you crack a country postoffice?"

"No."

"Then how did you cheat the Government?"

"Why, you remember the census, don't you?"

"Yes, yes, go on," said the district attorney.

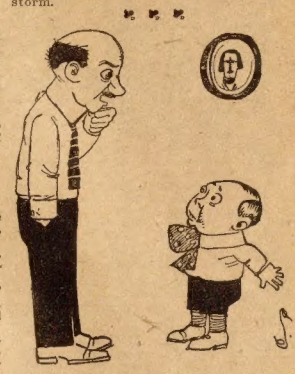
"Well," hissed the man, looking over his shoulder furtively, "when the census man came to my house I didn't give him my middle name."

Stopping a Run.

Many years ago, in consequence of a commercial panic, there was a severe run on a bank in South Wales and the small farmers jostled each other in crowds to draw out their money. Things were rapidly going from bad to worse, when the bank manager, in a fit of desperation, suddenly bethought him of an expedient. By his direction, a clerk, having heated some sovereigns in a frying pan, paid them over the counter to an anxious applicant. "Why, they're quite hot," said the latter, as he took them up.

"Of course," was the reply, "what else could you expect? They are only just out of the mold. We are coining them by hundreds as fast as we can."

"Coining them," thought the simple agriculturist, "then there is no fear of the money running short." With this their confidence revived, the panic abated, and the bank was enabled to weather the storm.



Papa Dadmore—Come and see the two little baby brothers that came last night.

Little Horace—Say, dad, which one are we goin' to keep?

The Prevaricators' Club.

In a little country village a crowd of loafers around a store got to talking about echoes, and Jim Sanders, said down where he was born and raised there was an echo, and he used to put it to a peculiar use. He said that every night before he went to bed he would put his head out the window and say:

"Jim Sanders! Seven o'clock; time to get up!"

He would start the echo going, and next morning at 7 o'clock it would get back and say "Jim Sanders! Seven o'clock; time to get up!"

Deacon Witherspoon said he didn't know much about echoes; but he'd seen it rain about as hard as anybody ever seen it rain. Somebody said:

"Deacon, how hard did you ever see it rain?"

"Well, sir," said the deacon, "once upon a time, when I was at home, we had an old cider barrel laying out in the yard with both ends out and the bunghole, up, and would you believe it, it rained so hard into that bunghole that water couldn't run out of both ends fast enough and it swelled up and busted."

We thought that was pretty good for a deacon.

Reuben Henry said he'd never seen it rain very hard, but he'd seen some mighty cold weather. Somebody said:

"Rube, how cold did you ever see it get?"

He said: "Well, sir, one time when I was living down in Pickaway County, in hogkilling time, we had a kettle of boiling water setting on a stove and we took it out in the yard and it froze so doggone quick the ice was hot."

When Up in the Air.

We have frequently been asked to suggest some form of dress for women airshippers, some sort of aerial costume for lady aeronauts, and it is only after continual persuasion that we offer the following advice regarding raiment for female balloonists:

1. Dress very plainly—aeroplanely, in fact.

2. Your hat must contain a flower—self-rising flour is most appropriate, as it will help the machine to rise.

3. If you wear any flowers at your breast, they must be made of paper—flypaper.

4. You should wear a dress with old-fashioned balloon sleeves.

5. Do not wear long hatpins, as they tend to attract lightning, and when you are up in an airship lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place—it doesn't have to, as there isn't anything left to strike the second time. We would suggest fastening your hat to your hair with clothespins.

Timid Lover—Jimmie, I'll give you this quarter if you'll steal me a lock of your sister's hair.

James—A'right—make it 50 cents and I'll steal ye a whole switch!

TRANCE or DEATH
or A Doctor's Mystic Power
By ALVAH MILTON KERR.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

WITHOUT delay I turned to my task that morning. So much hung upon the issue, I felt myself respond to a kind of insanity of eagerness. I think I have never yet set out upon any quest with a sharper sense of haste.

A half mile westward the sea spread its waters under a tangle of mangroves, rendering the shore impassable. Eastward from the cove the beach flowed off in a far, wavering line of sand, and along this I hurried feverishly. Here and there were prints of soles like those left in the cove, and hope and expectation grew all alive within me. I had gone forward through the larger part of an hour when I suddenly came to other marks than those I had been following. Casting about with sharpest curiosity, I saw a mound at the wood's edge, and approaching nearer was surprised to find it a grave. For a little time I stood wondering at it, asking myself whose body lay at its bottom, and feeling a cold fear creep round my heart that here was the end of my search. Falling upon my knees in a sudden wild hunger to know the truth, I began digging the sand away with my fingers. The day was close and hot and my brow fed the moist grit many a salt drop as I worked. The grave proved to be no more than a shallow bed made in the sand, and almost before I wished I came upon a cloth which apparently covered a human face. Slowly and with nerves all atremble, I drew the cloth aside. A cry of horror broke from me, and I fell back panting and staring at the appalling sight. It was my father's face, once so handsome, but now, great God, how ghastly and distorted! I cried out wildly in pity of him. All resentment, large in my heart with years of nourishing, fell away from me in horror of my deed. I could feel nothing but compassion and remorse. I had never loved him as a child should love a parent, but the fearful wreck I had made of him, unworthy as he doubtless was, wrung my very soul as I looked upon him.

I covered up the accusing face and stood apart weak and unmanned. What could I do? Where should I go now? All my sudden-sprung hopes of honorable acquittal at the bar of my own conscience and the bar of the law lay flat. I walked down the beach, aimless and irresolute. Here and there lay piles of old drift, and new debris cast outward by the sea in its convulsions, and upon one of these heaps I presently sat and tried to reflect.

"Who had buried the dead man, and whither had they gone?" That was the final query. I arose and began looking about for an answer.

With great astonishment I perceived that about the grave were no other footprints than those I had followed and my own. Such other impressions as remained were as from a human body having been thrown or drawn along the sand. Profoundly mystified I began searching about the spot in a sort of widening circle, when presently, with a great surge of the blood, I came upon a boat lying among the trees. Palpably it had been hurled into the thicket by a storm, possibly by the tropic tempest which sent the Lady Marie ashore.

The boat was a four-oared affair, heavy and cumbersome, and lay keel up. About were traces of some one having attempted to right it, the task having doubtless been given over from weakness or lack of mechanical means. By wasting well-nigh all my strength I succeeded in righting the craft, but was repaid by finding some canned meats and water-soaked bread in the little locker. Of these I partook as only a starving man might. I then began looking for the oars, and after a long and tiresome search among the piles of drift, I found three of them, one being broken. After that I labored until night in getting the boat down to the water, and only succeeded by using an improvised handspike and round pieces of wood placed as rollers under the keel.

I longed to sleep where human beings were that night. Since looking upon the face in the grave a nameless dread weighed upon me, and when darkness pillowed its grizzly head upon the world, the mystery and loneliness seemed to deepen and become more vivid. I could almost lay my hand upon that hideous, unseen something which children feel in darkness, yet it was perhaps no more than a haunting horror of that object in the grave, the shock of having viewed a visage, once strangely attractive, now repellant and unearthly in the spell of death. In the end I took myself far down the beach and spent, as may be readily fancied, a sad enough night upon the sand.

With the fall of darkness there came a thick fog over the sea; that lay heavy upon my chest, and I tossed and dozed and dreamed, to wake and see a yellow wool of mist about me in the morning, with a saffron bleared spot in the east where the sun was. I arose heavy of heart and limb and returned to the boat, and presently searched all about the grave to hit if possible upon the direction taken by the person, for there seemed but one, who had given my father burial. That that person seemed unquestionably the one who had lain in the cove so long, and whose footsteps I had followed believing them my father's, made a wreck of all my deductions. But one thing seemed clear: Dr.

Before me lay a crescent curve of beach.

Stanwood lay buried here in the sand, and the other had gone inland through the forest or abroad upon the water; the part left me being a fresh sense of my old weight of guilt and this baffling mystery.

I came at length and stood by the boat, mentally debating my course. As I reflected, a strong appreciation of the moral decay of my father came upon me. Surely his once royal nature had wasted sadly, falling through luxury into weakness and crime. Why should I go to Garcia to answer for the death of such a man? Why not make myself a home in this island, and lose myself to the world, living sanely with nature?

A kind of pride stayed me against this cowardice; besides, the more closely destiny pressed me along the steps of Dr. Stanwood's life, the more heavily that suspicion of my mother's fate hung in my mind. Always in such moments I knew infallibly that, in the end, I should come to her grave whatever fell. As for Marguerite, only that man who has been struck to the heart with love of one who is unattainable may conceive how I longed to look upon her face. It is a kind of law in us that that which we desire greatly, and may not have, grows precious from our waiting. It was so with me. Through all these weeks of hurry and turmoil, of death, and danger, and strange happenings, I had dreamed of her as one parching of thirst in a desert might dream of distant fountains of cool water. Swayed by dual inclinations, I both wished to get on speedily to Garcia and to flee in terror from it. I ended by building a rude fence of driftwood about the lonely grave, and having set up part of a broken mast to mark the spot, got into the boat and pulled slowly down the shore. The future looked tangled and difficult, but life must be sustained, and the way to Marguerite and that loved sleeper on the little knoll must be found.

As I drove the heavy boat forward, the fog began to lift and waste itself in the upper realm, and finally the sea ran clear, snapping with sparkles and whitening under the wind's light kisses as with a thousand curling crusts of silvery frost. My way lay along the north side of the island, and I hoped in this course might lie a human habitation or some point where steamers touched the land for fuel. Besides, if by any chance I were driven off shore I should probably be thrown homeward for somewhere north and east, I felt convinced, lay the region I desired and dreaded.

At length I saw that the body of the land fell downward and lay almost level with the face of the sea. Indeed, I at first thought that the sea flowed inland at this point, but drawing nearer, I saw that a vast sheet of whitish vapor lay over a swamp, the extent of which I could not see. Hour after hour as I labored eastward, I saw feathered creatures in endless thousands approach out of heaven from the south and drop into the vapor as into a sea of milk. Plainly they came from some unseen land or island to feed in the mighty swamp. When I rested the oars a moment, I could hear the miles on miles of marshland roaring like an ocean.

Near noon, at least the sun then hung dim and high, a wind sprang up in the south, and moving that vast sheet of unhealthful choking steam out upon the sea, fell dead and left it. This stifling, sickening scum off the swamp lay upon the water neck high. I could only keep my course by rising up now and then to look out over it; under it the sea rolled lazily. I think I should have died in that ill-smelling reek, had not the wind presently quickened, and rolled and rent the evil stuff and sent it upward into clouds.

When it was well off me, I dropped the oars and drew down the cleared air with a rare pleasure.

I have seldom tasted a thing with so good a relish. After that I lumbered onward, the heavy boat dragging sorely on the single pair of oars. As nearly as I could make out, a sandy beach skirted the island all the way, and more than once I questioned if I would not have made better progress afoot. On the whole, however, the boat seemed the best, since I had no desire to struggle through the infested tangle of the island, a course unavoidable to one on foot.

As the day went, the atmosphere grew heavier, and the sea got more motion.

(Continued on page seven.)

COMES A TIME

When Coffee Shows What It Has Been Doing.

"Of late years coffee has disagreed with me," writes a matron from Rome, N. Y.

"Its lightest punishment being to make me 'logy' and dizzy, and it seemed to thicken up my blood.

"The heaviest was when it upset my stomach completely, destroying my appetite and making me nervous and irritable, and sent me to my bed. After one of these attacks, in which I nearly lost my life, I concluded to quit the coffee and try Postum.

"It went right to the spot! I found it not only a most palatable and refreshing beverage, but a food as well.

"All my ailments, the 'loginess' and dizziness, the unsatisfactory condition of my blood, my nervousness and irritability disappeared in short order and my sorely afflicted stomach began quickly to recover. I began to rebuild and have steadily continued until now. Have a good appetite and am rejoicing in sound health which I owe to the use of Postum." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

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Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Hope of a Leader.

"Have you secured harmony in your party organization?"

"Not exactly," replied Senator Sorghum. "But I think we have found a man whose is big enough to drown the discord."

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You don't have to pay 50c or $1.00 a pint for listerian antiseptics or peroxide. You can make 16 pints of a more cleansing, germicidal, healing and deodorizing antiseptic solution with one 25c box of Paxtine,—a soluble antiseptic powder, obtainable at any drug store.

Paxtine destroys germs that cause disease, decay and odors,—that is why it is the best mouth wash and gargle, and why it purifies the breath, cleanses and preserves the teeth better than ordinary dentifrices, and in sponge bathing it completely eradicates perspiration and other disagreeable body odors. Every dainty woman appreciates this and its many other toilet and hygienic uses.

Paxtine is splendid for sore throat. Inflamed eyes and to purify mouth and breath after smoking. You can get Paxtine Toilet Antiseptic at any drug store, price 25c and 50c, or by mail postpaid from The Paxton Toilet Co., Boston, Mass., who will send you a free sample if you would like to try it before buying.

Fashion Note.

"This slim craze has its disadvantages."

"As to how?"

"The narrower a girl is the less display space she has for diamonds."

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Murine Eye Remedy Co., Chicago.

Nowadays.

Duhl—What does this mean: The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world?

Keene—It means that nursemaids are almost as important as suffragettes.

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Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 991, Blairsville, Pa.

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Greene—Why do you say that you will marry only a widow?

Keene—Because it's wisest to marry a woman who has already discovered that men are not angels.

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(Continued from page six.)

The swells, following the wind, ran northward, hindering me sorely. I fell to running my eye over the sky with some anxiety for a scummy vapor had been drawing out of the lower levels all day, like cream rising out of milk, until now, in the middle of the afternoon, it hung over the world like a vast, gray tent, a blue hole opening through it into the higher realm near the zenith.

The wind, out of the south, and growing steadily in force, was hot and laden with scents of the island flowers. I had long since thrown off my coat, and I now threw off my hat, and turned the boat's nose toward the shore conscious that I had a sharp pull before me.

Despite all effort I had been drifting outward, and now, after pulling hard for a half hour, I felt a genuine alarm, for I seemed not to have advanced an inch. The wind and swells were running against me, and there seemed some sort of tide, or undertow, that sucked at the keel drawing strongly northward. And yet it may have been only the heaves of water slapping under the lifted prow, and driving me back toward the unknown middle sea. At any rate, toil as I might, I could not bring the boat to land, and at length dropped the oars and let the craft drift, while I ate a few bites of food from the locker. I was entirely conscious that if I drifted off into the sea, I was likely to dine on air in lieu of either bread or meat, and at this juncture I thought to take something that would help me from that peril. I felt that it would take a deal inside my ribs to get the lumbering boat back to land.

And the event proved that I needed far more than I had, either of food or muscle, for the northward-rolling waters carried me outward with inexorable sureness. I fought with it for a time, holding the boat's prow straight to the land, then took it obliquely, hoping to haul in landward on some favoring current farther eastward. But it all came to nothing, save that at the end of a long struggle I was several miles farther out in the sea than when I began. I saw plainly that the thing I hoped was impossible, unless the wind fell or shifted, but the air current held steadily out of the south, or slightly west of that, and rather stiffened than lulled as the day wore on, while the swells lengthened and arched their white manes higher. I was reeking with heat.

At last, near the time when the sun should set, for there was only a strange, bloody tousle of wrack in the West, I saw the palms of the island sinking, and as I dropped lower and lower over the horizon line, they wavered and at last faded out, and I was alone upon the wide sea.

I knew, then, as for getting back to the island, that such a possibility had ceased. I was exhausted nigh to fainting, and with a throe of desperation I laid the boat's prow about to the north, and sitting down to the tiller, let her go with the swells.

The night was one of the longest in my life. Exhausted as I was, sleep for me for an instant was not to be thought of. The heaves seemed larger than ever, and toward dawn I felt compelled to set steadily at the tiller to keep the boat from falling into the trough and being washed over. All night a low, long streak of sky lay bare and star lit at the sea's edge across the north. By that I steered; it was near dawn before the cloud-scum shut down upon it like the lid upon a sleepy eye, and it may be that the continuation of my life lay to the account of that glimmering, far-off rift, which all night thrust a faint light southward into the vault of darkness.

With the first blue gleam of morning I looked abroad for evidence of land, but the glistening back of the world, heaving slowly out of the dark rounded down to the gray eaves of heaven everywhere without a pinch of earth. I had hoped that my eyes would light upon an island, but there was no more than the gray-green waste of water lapping everywhere. How far it was to the shores of Florida I could only conjecture; if it were fifty miles, or one hundred, or one hundred and fifty, or even two hundred, I could not say. Yet, I felt sure it could not be nearly so many as that last number. To one thing my mind was made up: I would steer straight onward until I met a shore of some sort.

There was no such sunrise that morning, more than a broad reddening of the muffled welkin, and a coppery hue upon the sea. But the south wind was far less wuuing with its heat. I took some food again. I now felt gratified that the wind and seas ran so well and steadily toward my destination, and to help all forward I took to the oars and caught the swells occasionally with a stroke. I was quite wet, for all night the spray had now and then dashed over the stern, but in the warm air I felt little discomfort.

It seemed an interminable day. Before the fall of night I saw islands far to the west, and again land loomed out of the waste upon the right, but that, too, proved to be an island, and I wanted none of them.

During the afternoon the dull steam that lay over the sky was broken up, and everywhere were huge floating wracks of cloud instead. Among these the sun went down in astonishing splendor. A little later the wind f_ll dead. However, the sea ran strongly, as I w.shed, and much of the night I labored at the oars, lonqwing with weary eyes the moons course tarough the buffeting wreckage of the sky.

At length the broken gleams from overhead were suddenly cut off, and a shouting wind leaped out of the southwest. Before another hour had fallen away, I counted myself lost. The prow of the boat soared upward on the great waves, and with a swimming, blood-chilling kind of sense I went down into the roaring hollows. The whole aspect of things was frightful; the heaving, shadowy seas, the wild tumult, the screaming blast, the darkness and the danger all conspired to unnerve me. Still, as best I could, I kept the boat running with the wind. There may have been an hour of this; I cannot say; I only know that at last my hair stirred upon my scalp and my heart stood still with terror; for stretching athwart the leaping prow I saw a looming blackness that appalled me. Into it the boat plunged as into a cavern; the next moment it fell crashing upon an unseen shore.

When light came that morning, and it was upon the verge of day that the boat came hurling shoreward, I think I have never known a moment in which I felt more amazement, for the little craft lay, as one might say, upon the very door-sill of Garcia. I could scarcely credit my eyes, but I stood upon the beach at the foot of the main street of my home town.

The boat lay upon the beach, high and dry; for, while the wild billow which brought me ashore threw it far up, I had leaped low when the keel crashed upon the ground, and laying hold on the prow, had hauled on the boat as the next heave came sprawling against its stern, and so had run the little craft out of harm's way. When light had come fairly upon tne town, the citizens came running to the shore.

No doubt that which they found there was commonplace beyond their expectation: A ship's boat, half burst in two, lying upon the sand, a wet, sun-burned, hollow-cheeked, bare-headed youth in sailor's shirt and trousers standing by it. That which the people of Garcia had cause to expect, and indubitably had a right to anticipate, was not. Mr. Marker, stepping from the plank of the Lady Marie upon the landing, with a pale, well-dressed youth in hand-cuffs by his side. Poor Marker! he, too, had looked forward to that; and now only God and the vultures knew the end of him! I think for a little time none came near to me than twenty feet, and most of them were seemingly content with a view from twice that distance, while all had open mouth, frowzy heads, and the look of people dreaming.

Suddenly I was taken with an inspiration, and stepping upon the prow of the boat, I raised my voice and spoke to the crowd.

"Is the deputy sheriff, or any other officer of the law, present?" I said, and waited.

"Yas, heur's Jim Hamlin, he's th' dippity," said a voice. "Mr. Hamlin, will you please step forward?" I asked again, and again waited.

A big, bony, honest-looking yokel came out of the crowd, and advancing, stood blushing and looking up at my face.

"Mr. Hamlin," I said, when he had come close to me, "I am Francis Stanwood by name. I believe your county court has an indictment against me for the murder of Dr. Stanwood, of Magnolia Place. I have come to answer the charge, and now place myself in your hands. I say this for your information, and for the benefit of your people here, that Sheriff Marker did his duty with great exactitude; that he arrested me in New Orleans, to which place I had gone, not to evade the law but upon a very serious personal business of my own, and that while bringing me to this place his ship, the Lucifer, Dr. Stanwood's, was wrecked, and Mr. Marker, by a very unfortunate circumstance, lost his life. I have reason to believe that no one beside myself survived the wreck or its direct effect."

As I paused for breath, for I was now speaking to the people and not to the deputy, a woman in the crowd threw up her hands and fell in a faint. Afterward I learned that she was Marker's wife. The remainder of the crowd, to which there were panting additions at every moment, looked at each other or stood with dropped jaws gazing dumbly at me. Away through the pines to the eastward the sun was rising, the blue-green combers fell behind me noisily, the wind blew my hair about my eyes. I remember the scene as if it were yesterday.

"In what sort uv er way did Sheriff Marker git killed?" drawled the same voice that had spoken before.

"We were cast upon an island, perhaps a hundred miles southwest of here," I went on, suddenly conscious that I stood upon dangerous ground, "and while crossing the island on foot a great snake, a copperhead, crushed him to death. I afterward took the key from his pocket and unlocked my shackles and threw them away. I had to do this in order to save my life." I saw the men looking at each other in an odd, ominous fashion. "If you think I did your sheriff any harm, you are quite mistaken," I went on; "the fact that I have come here of my own accord to answer the charge against me should be sufficient proof that he did not come to his death by my hands. I will make a full statement of the whole terrible affair at the proper time and to the proper person, Dr. Stanwood's wife."

"Deputy, please lead the way," I said, and as we went out through the crowd, I saw wonder, kindness, incredulity, suspicion and admiration mirrored upon the different faces, each expressing the mean or noble spirit which lay behind it. There was a deal of expectorating by the men, as in all cases of subdued excitement, for evidently each one of them had placed a chew of tobacco in his mouth before donning his clothes, or while hastening to the beach. The women whispered and swallowed as if their tongues were dry.

When we had passed out of the crowd, the whole concourse, streaming along behind us, fell to talking in hushed exclamations, punctuated now and then with oaths. I felt a pronounced sense of strangeness and humiliation; the publicity of my position annoyed me; I felt a certain pride that I had met this people face to face, and had had my say, for I knew beyond question that for two months now they had canvassed me derogatively. The words I had spoken had been uttered almost involuntarily, and were to a degree actuated by a feeling of defiance, for, being the object of it, I detested their curiosity.

The young deputy sheriff showed so much decency as to take me to the tavern, where I had first seen Marker in what now seemed to me a former age, and where I soon put myself into more presentable apparel, got from the luggage I had left with the landlord upon my former visit. I sat at breakfast alone that morning, the young deputy remaining out in the tavern office and barroom, where a crowd of excited men walked about, drank, expectorated, and loudly discussed Marker's death and my affairs. When the meal was finished, and the reader may safely conclude that it made a strong appeal to my palate after two days and nights upon the sea, I felt that the crucial season of my life was approaching. All morning, threading my every act and word, thoughts of Marguerite, of my mother, of Dr. Beckham, and of my trial, had fled to and fro through my mind. I longed to ask some one if Marguerite were well; how she had borne this overwhelming trouble, and if she stood for pushing me to the wall; but somehow a kind of shame crept upon me when I thought to mention her to others. I must wait a little.

When I came out from the dining-room into the hotel office, the male conglomerate clustered about the bar in a sort of alcove off the main room, fell suddenly quiet, wiping their mouths upon their hands and their hands upon their breeches and staring at me. Deputy Hamlin was waiting for me by the inner door. I took him about the waist, landlord, but was told that he had gone to Punta Gorda. A black-haired clerk was serving the customers at the bar.

"Now, Mr. Hamlin," I said, "I am ready. I suppose it is jail for me, is it?"

He seemed about my own age, was tall, with a rugged face and blue eyes. He colored a little as he looked at me. "Well, Mr. Stanwood, I s'pose so," he said reluctantly. "But I reckon you alls ain't in much danger uv runnin' away?" He smiled, and for some reason we were at once friends.

"No," I said laughing, "God knows I have had a hard enough time getting here. I shall hardly leave until the thing is settled."

"Yes, it looks like you wuz more in fur settlin' hit 'n' anybody else," he laughed. "Well, I reckon we might go over to the Co't House, 'n' if Judge Dewlong's come roun' we 'ill see what he says."

We went out together, a dozen or more men slouching along behind. On every side children, women, and men stopped and stood looking at me.

"Gosh!" said Hamlin, suddenly, "if I wouldn't like to bust some uv these folks' heads! They been talkin' 'bout me bein' green 'n' f'om th' country! but if I wuz as green as they air, I'd lay out th' sun twel I either got ripe or rotted! They been talkin' a hole passel uv trash to me 'bout you alls, but they jes' simply don't knew er man w'en they see one!"

Evidently they had been pushing him unduly, for he looked very disgusted. I smiled, though my mind was in a sore ferment.

One block west from the main street, we came to an open lot set thick with young trees; among these stood a rather large wooden building. I knew this was the seat of power in the county, the officer's quarters and the Court, but I had never been so near it before. Indeed I had never been much in Garcia, my life having been spent at Magnolia Place, at Punta Gorda, and in the North. Now the town had become a place of strange interest to me, and this building a thing of dread and fascination. I looked up at its weather-beaten front as we passed into it, with the haunting thought that I might one day come out of it a ruined and condemned man.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

We found Judge Dewlong unlocking the door of his office, one of a half dozen

(Continued on page eight.)

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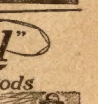

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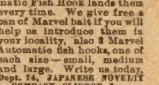

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Chicago Ledger

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GENTLE JABS.

You can't destroy courage by plucking it up.

The can opener is mightier than the corkscrew.

It's human nature to want the things we can't get.

The cup that cheers is a noisy piece of crockery.

Many a political boss isn't any kind of a boss at home.

It is easier to put up a bluff than it is to put up the stuff.

It's easy to fill the public eye if you have the "dust."

Charity organizations uncover a multitude of sinners.

A signal failure has wrecked many a train of thought.

Many a wife-beater draws the line at beating a carpet.

Unless a girl is hard to please she's not worth the effort.

The dog with the handsomest collar seldom wins the fight.

Not all women who look in a mirror are lost in admiration.

There are more good women in this world than great ones.

Every man should master the art of concealing his ignorance.

The man who praises the baby always wins the mother's smile.

A full beard may enable a man to keep out of some bad scrapes.

A trusted employe should be known by the company that keeps him.

People should enjoy cool receptions in warm weather—but they don't.

Give a designing widow rope enough and she'll rope some man in.

He is a wise man who laughs at the antediluvian jokes of his tailor.

It sometimes happens that a general awakening follows a dull sermon.

Even a pessimist is apt to be optimistic when he has something to sell.

It doesn't take the average man long to get used to making a fool of himself.

Hypocrisy is pardonable in those who appear to be cheerful when they are sad.

(Continued from page seven.)

rooms on either side of a dingy hall, which ran straight through the building from the front door, opening at the rear into the small corridor of a little jail. Judge Dewlong, who was neither dewy nor long, but a little man with a large, bald, pink-crowned head, small reddish eyes, and a sharp nose netted with purple veins, looked at me over his glasses with manifest surprise.

"This heah is Mr. Stanwood, Jedge," said Hamlin. "He come in with a row-boat this mornin'; he comes to give hiself up th' co't."

The judge had unlocked the door and pushed it open; he stood with the key in his hand looking at me, a self-forgetting, nonplused expression overspreading his countenance.

"Where is Marker?" he asked, with a blubbery, rumbling kind of voice, for nature had given the little man a big, though unmusical, larynx.

"Mr. Marker lost his life on the way here," I said, looking him straight in the face. "We were shipwrecked."

He continued gazing at me a moment longer, then entered the room, rumbling out an exclamation with an oath at the end of it. He threw his hat over upon the dusty window-ledge and sat down at his desk.

"How did this happen?" he demanded.

I told him briefly and distinctly. Something about the man nettled me; perhaps it was unconscious resentment that so small a person should invest himself with so large an air of authority. When I had finished, he tossed some legal papers about upon the desk, rubbed his pink crown, cleared his throat, and looked at me.

"Well," he said, at last, "have you any confession or statement to make relative to the death of Dr. Stanwood?" He turned his face and looked at me again.

"I have," I said. "I wish first to make a statement to Mrs. Stanwood. It is due her. I shall then submit a statement to yourself in writing, drawn by an attorney. I wish as little delay as possible. If Mrs. Stanwood could be brought here today I would be glad of it; if not, Mr. Hamlin, here, can take me out to Magnolia Place."

"Certainly," said the judge; "he can take care of you. You had best go out to the house, for Mrs. Stanwood has been sick, and, though I understand she is now around, it would be rather a long ride for her to come here."

A thrill went through my heart with his words. Poor Marguerite! Then trouble had racked her into illness! A vision of Magnolia Place, with the pale girl lying in a hammock upon the gallery, as I saw her that last day, swept through my mind.

"You are certain that you can meet the indictment, Mr. Stanwood?" I heard the judge asking.

I came out of my momentary reverie with a start. "The indictment?—Yes, sir. I can meet the indictment," I said.

"Very well; I shall be glad to see your statement of the case before your preliminary examination is called."

"There need be no examination," I said. "You will call none when I have filed my answer." I arose from my chair; the judge fetched a low whistle and shook his head.

"The evidence against you is pretty strong, Mr. Stanwood," he rumbled.

"When I say that Dr. Stanwood was alive more than a month after the date upon which I am supposed to have murdered him, and that he now lies buried upon an island a hundred miles or more from here, and that I can prove this, then you will understand me, judge."

Again he whistled, then looked fixedly a moment at the deputy, who stood leaning against the wall near the closed door.

"Well, Mr. Stanwood," he said, with a sudden fervor of affability, "I shall be glad if this is so! Certainly I shall be glad! Yes, indeed! Hamlin, show Mr. Stanwood every consideration. Permit him to remain at the hotel if he prefers, though of course you will remain in his company. If you have an attorney, Mr. Stanwood, and will present the matter to me properly, I will, of course, admit you to bail until your hearing."

I thanked him, and, accompanied by the deputy, went out. Men were sitting upon the threshold of the main entrance, along the board walk which ran from the door to the gate, all whittling, expectorating, and talking in low tones. The atmosphere was that of a country funeral. The deputy asked if I wished to go to Magnolia Place at once. After reflecting a moment I decided that I was not able, physically or mentally, to meet so great a trial.

"No," I said, "let us wait until to-morrow morning. I have not slept an hour in the last fifty. Now that I have got back to a point where I can take my breath, I find that I am fairly drunk with exhaustion."

"All right; you alls can jes' make y'er-self comferble in th' tarvern. I'll loaf roun' 'en see what nobody don't make no rumpus. Say, you alls hit th' jedge solid like! That air tickled me right smart!" He smiled broadly, glancing sideways at me with a blushing sort of admiration.

"I was fighting for my life, or at least for something as dear as that," I said. "One cannot always be polite; when a man is charged with murder, he is not likely to show himself a Chesterfield."

"No, that's so," he assented soberly. "Putty tough thing to put up ergin a feller, shore. I'll be mighty pleased to see you alls out uv it."

We went to the tavern, and, being assigned an upper room near the front of the house, I went into it, and, lying down, soon fell asleep.

When I awoke again, the lamps were alight. The flare of one of them came into my room through the glass transom over the door. Through the window I saw that the main street of the town was feebly lighted by oil lamps. A misty fog of rain was falling, dimming the lights in the scattered houses until they were mere sickly splotches of yellow in the darkness. Across the wet street I saw a shadowy group of men standing in the drizzle, looking toward the house. Everything was oddly quiet.

"It must be ten or eleven o'clock," I thought, "else the people go to bed very early."

I was broad awake; my mind seemed singularly clear. I dressed and sat down by the open window for a moment. The window gave out upon the upper gallery, and presently I stepped out upon that, and stood by the balusters looking into the vague, gray night.

It was then that I heard the muffled noise of many horses' feet moving through the dark, muddy streets, seemingly upon the outskirts of the town. This presented no especial significance to me, until perhaps a quarter of an hour later, when, as I walked quietly up and down the balcony, fearing that I might awaken some one, I suddenly saw masked men running out of the darkness, toward the house. They came from every side that was visible to me. Almost with this first wave of thought and emotion there fell a crash below, then cries and noise of fighting, blows, yells, the fall of bodies that shook the house, the breaking of chairs and the overthrow of tables. It seemed as if the building were being wrecked.

I looked down over the balcony rail and saw an uneven circle of men stretched around the house; in the dim drizzle they looked to be clad in long coats, slouched hats, and cloth masks. There was something daunting, gruesome, in the effect of it. A fresh wave of horror went to the very roots of my hair with that one look, and I leaped through the window into my room and dropped the sash. I found the little bolt to the door and shoved it home. All this time, like the approach of hungry, hastening fire, the cries and noise of fighting were climbing up the stair and down the passage toward my room. I heard the shivering scream of women, oaths, panting, the rending of objects, the thud of great stunning blows that seemed to carry the cracking of bones with them, the hoarse bawling voices in the street below;

"Bring out th' sheriff-killer! Give 'im th' hemp! That's w'at 'e needs!" In the passage another voice, yelling between gasps and blows: "Yeh can't hev him! I'll die firs'! Stan' back!"

I turned round and round; every nerve in me seemed a burning wire, my muscles drew into knots. O God! why hadn't I something to defend my life with! If there was a lamp in the room I knew not where it was. A faint glimmer came in from the street. I still turned round and round, a kind of insanity of angry terror burning all through me. The pounding and straining and shuffling came by my door, and a wilder confusion than before seemed all through and about the house. I then knew that it was Hamlin defending me. All in a moment I heard the young giant on the balcony; in the struggle he had been carried through the passage door out onto the gallery; a dozen men, from the sound, seemed at his throat like wolves. I heard his blows plainly; I heard the porch balusters break and some one fall with a cry into the street below; still the struggle on the gallery and in the passage raged. In the midst of it the door of my rooms crashed and flew open. I was by it, with a chair lifted. Light leaped in from the passage lamp and from lanterns, but not clearly; the passage was choked with pushing, panting, steaming men. As the door opened, with the chair I crushed the first man that followed it, and the next, then the chair flew into pieces. Still they crowded in yelling like maniacs. In that minute I was lifted out of the normal into madness. It seemed my last moment of life, and with it something told me to spend all my strength and spend it quickly. I hit only my fists, but they went like bolts, and a man went headlong with every blow. Did this wild-beast crowd think they could take me out and hang me like a dog! Something like that went screaming through my brain with every burning plunge of my pulse. There was but one help for me, to strike so rapidly, to turn so constantly and swiftly, that no man could strike me with fist, club, or knife. Their numbers were against them, for they jostled each other and tripped over the fallen ones. Almost with my first blow I had sent a big fellow crashing through the window, carrying out the sash. Now two or three leaped out through that opening, glad in their terror to be rid of me. Still the mob crowded in from the passage, but I kept an opening round me where I fought—I scarcely knew how.

There seemed six or eight men upon the floor, trampling over them were perhaps a dozen more, crowding toward me and being knocked back by my blows. I heard through the turmoil something like Judge Dewlong's hoarse bellow, commanding peace in the name of the State. If Hamlin had fallen, I could not tell. All went with me in dream-like swiftness. The men struggled with each other, vainly trying to come to a grapple with me. The room was full of hot breath and the smell of blood and wet clothes. My fists burned like fire, and my head swam, yet I felt that strength

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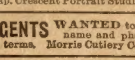

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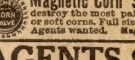

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which the insane have, a wild cry of power and action.

But ereiong I must have gone down before their numbers and been lost, only for a wild figure that leaped in through the shattered window. It was the stranger whom I had seen that memorable night upon the bridge! He was hatless, his shirt was rent across his breast and soaked red, his eyes shone glistening with fury. He tore the struggling mass open, hurling men right and left, and pressed in close to me, striking blows that sent more than one of my foes blind and plunging.

Still, they pressed upon us, while I fought without sense of breath or feeling. Suddenly I was thrown backward. I saw a knife in a stripped, muscle-knotted arm above me. It flashed across the anger-distorted faces toward my breast, but the arm that drove it snapped and doubled from a swift fist that met it. The weapon fell upon me. The stranger snatched it up and swept it round the circle, and the room cleared as if it had been strewn with adders.

I got to my feet, but reeled round, gasping for breath, and sank upon the edge of the crimson-spattered bed, calling on God to succor me from I knew not what. The light streaming in through the door looked green, the floor heaved, I was sick with a deadly nausea. The stranger lay across my feet upon his face, the wet knife slipping from his fingers. He lifted a white, agonized countenance toward me and tried to grasp my hand, but missed it as if he saw but vaguely.

"I—am—your father!" he whispered hoarsely and sank forward. With a cry of wonder I caught him about the shoulders and lifted him, staring into his face. It was fearfully gray and drawn, and I saw the red rill of his life welling into the grooves and dents of his muscle-matted chest. I may have spoken, I may have shouted, I cannot say truly what I did, only that I laid him down quickly, and ran out of the door, along the passage, and stumbling dizzily down the stairs, came into the office, calling for help. I had no clear idea of what I was doing or what I wanted, but I saw in an odd, dream-like way, that Judge Dewlong hoarse with passion, was hurling anathemas, threats, and law at the heads of a dispersing crowd, which, panic-stricken, dissolved away in all directions, carrying or leading the bruised and wounded. Hamlin, hatless and bleeding, and smeared with mud, for he had fallen with others from the gallery, was handcuffing two fellows together near the door.

"Here, marshal!" he shouted to a man with a star on the lapel of his coat, who came in through the door, holding a young man by the arm. "Jes' watch these fellers! There's more trash upstairs! Hullo, Stanwood," he cried, as he turned and met me face to face, "thort you alls wuz up salt creek, shore! Some fellers w'at yeh slapped ersleep left up thare, ain't they?"

"Yes. Is Dr. Dubette here? Where is the landlady?"

"Gosh! I don't know!" he panted, and leaped by me and up the stairway. "Reckon the wimen tuck an' shet theirselves up somewhar'! I've got th' feller at set this ball a-rollin'!" he gasped out exultingly as we made the top of the stairs, for I was at his heels. "We'll put 'im whar he won't stir up no more hornets' nests in this county! He's been all roun' lyin' an' workin' this thing up terday!"

We were hurrying down the passage as he all but shouted these words. I had somehow the sense of one falling from a great height, a dizzy swimming lightness of head and a vision of many glimmering objects rushing toward and around me. As we crossed the threshold I saw the stranger lying by the bed, motionless, and with the frightful whiteness of death settling upon his face. Two other men lay upon the floor unconscious, three, having regained the use of their faculties, were scrambling over the broken balusters of the gallery. The furnishings of the apartment were wrecked, and dappled with red out of human veins.

"Man! Man! But you alls fit a great fout in here!" exclaimed the young giant, turning his eyes round the apartment as we came through the door. I heard him but could not reply. The floor and the prone forms upon it swayed and rose toward my face, and I gasped at the one who had called me his son, but a black flood seemed to pour over me, burying all in oblivion.

When I awoke, I lay upon a bed in another room. Several persons were about me, among them Hamlin. Palpably they had been busy in a concerted effort to restore me my senses. I looked at the young deputy inquiringly.

"I reckon yeh fit 'em a little too long," he said, half laughingly; "yeh tried to lick th' whole community an'—yeh come putty nigh doin' hit."

"Will you give me some water, please?" I asked, for my tongue was dry as dust.

When I had finished drinking of the water he held to my lips, I attempted to rise, but my head swam and I fell back helpless as an infant.

"Yeh jes' lay still," said the deputy kindly, "by mornin' y'll be all right. I'll look after things."

His prophecy proved untrue. Through four days and nights I lay sick with weakness, a sunken, nervous exhaustion in which I tossed and suffered strangely.

The day after that wild night was a wet one, the eaves wept steadily, and Hamlin and Dr. Dubette, the one making arrests and the other patching up wounded men, went about the town and county in "gum" coats and dripping hats; at least the young deputy looked uncomfortably bedraggled when he came to my room, which he did twice during the day, to see if things were quiet with me. Upon the first visit he brought a breech-loading carbine and left it in the corner of the room.

"If you alls sees any folks round w'at looks at yeh cross-eyed—well, you alls 'll know 'bout w'at to do, I reckon!" and he nodded toward the weapon.

I shook my head. "I don't want any more of it," I said.

"No? Well, th' communerty's putty badly used up, an' I reckon they won't pester us no furder. But if they do, they won't ketch us ersleep."

However, the day and the night wore away without fresh violence, a train of vague, changeful emotions and a dumb kind of marveling following me even into my sleep. I seemed not strong enough to wholly grasp the fact that in another room one lay dead who had called me his son. In my dulled, broken state, I could not rise to a clear comprehension of it, and yet, somehow, I wondered continually.

The next day, the coroner's inquest being in progress, I tottered, with Hamlin's help, into the apartment where I had been so sorely tried. The man still lay upon the floor, but decently composed and under a covering of white. I had no thought or care for those who were present, but came to the still form with that awe which no sane, wholesome creature may escape in the presence of a soul's house deserted of its tenant. I looked at the face, a sad quivering within me, for a certain indescribable cast of grief made the countenance strangely pitiful. It was a good, broad visage, with ample forehead and shapely nose, a straggling gray beard below and a silver-streaked tangle of waving hair above, with all the visible countenance netted by a web of tiny lines. In all hung that deadly pallor which comes of veins run empty.

I stood wondering at it. And this was my father! Sometime, somewhere, perhaps when I was a very little child, and he young and handsome, this man had held me in his arms and fondled and kissed me. He had loved me; that much seemed plain; else why this sacrifice? The gift of his life! A strange kind of awe of him crept upon me, a mingled gratitude and reverence and astonishment.

Questions were asked me: Had I been acquainted with the deceased previous to his death; did I know his name and residence; had I specific knowledge of the means of his taking off, and many other queries, all of which I answered in such wise as the reader, credulous of my ignorance, may readily conceive.

A written paper was placed in my hand by the coroner; had I any previous acquaintance with the contents of this statement? I dropped my eyes along the lines and, with swiftly increasing amazement, read as follows:

"To Whom It May Concern: The facts herein briefly set forth are true. It is a part of my knowledge, come by, no matter how, that one Francis Stanwood by name, has been charged with the murder of Dr. Julian Stanwood, his supposed father, and is soon to stand trial for the before-mentioned crime. This crime, it is charged, was committed by Francis Stanwood on or about March 11 of the present year. It was committed at dusk of that day, as I well know, but not by the hand of Francis Stanwood, but by the hand of the bearer and writer of these words.

"I myself passed the said Francis Stanwood upon the road between Punta Gorda and his mother's home upon that day. I inquired of him the way to Dr. Stanwood's house. Afterward, near night, I came to two roads near a river; one ran off southwestward, the other fell down a slope eastward, through trees, and crossed the river by a bridge. Not knowing the precise location of Dr. Stanwood's house, I followed the road, which, I now know, leads to the town of Garcia. As I went forward along this road, I saw a horseman riding toward me. This was perhaps a mile, or more, from the bridge. Having my own reasons for not wishing to be seen, I stepped into the undergrowth, and the gentleman passed without perceiving me. I then followed him through the dusk, for he rode slowly, and when we came upon the bridge, I ran forward and accosted him. He dismounted and we fell into an altercation, the cause and nature of which is not of import here. To be brief, he struck me, we struggled, and I proved his superior in physical prowess. He then drew a pistol and declared that he would kill me like a dog. We again grappled and fell; I got the pistol from him as we lay down upon the floor of the bridge, and when we got to our feet, I turned it upon him. He had cocked the weapon, and, as I held it toward his breast, not intending to shoot, but to frighten him off, he struck my arm, the pistol exploded, and he fell backward into the river, and was swept away. I solemnly declare this to be the truth.

"When the deed was irrevocably done, and the infinite regret which follows such a violation of nature had set in, I rode away upon Dr. Stanwood's horse. Late in the night I took the animal to the town of Garcia, and finding there a public barn unlocked, placed it in a stall, and went northeastward along the seashore. Finding a small, unused boat outside the limits of the town, I took it, and escaped upon the water to a point, the location of which, to the reader of this, need be of no concern. I aver, upon my honor, that this is true. It has fallen to my knowledge, no matter how, that a package of linens, marked with the name of Francis Stanwood, was found lying upon the bridge. This may have come about by the young man having passed over the bridge, either before or after the struggle, and, having seated himself there to rest and contemplate the water, laid down the bundle and gone on without it. It must be considered that the youth had walked more than thirty miles that day, and that he had not seen this stream, his childhood playmate, for five years. Hence nothing would seem more natural than that he should sit there to rest and look upon the water, and then pass onward, forgetful of present things.

"I make this statement, and place it upon my person, before going to Garcia to give myself into the hands of civil law, for the reason that if any evil should befall me before by verbal statement is made, the innocent man accused of this crime may not suffer.

"I am also prompted to this course for the reason, and it may well be held the chief motive, that the man accused of this crime is not the son of Dr. Stanwood, but the fruit of my own love!—Mark me! not of Dr. Julian Stanwood's son, but my own.

"Who I am, and how this may be, is not now, and may never be, for the public ear. I give the truth solely that he who reads this may believe that I would not see my own child perish for an error which was mine. Possibly no other eye may ever see this paper; nevertheless, I feel more content now that it is written, for no man knoweth from one moment to another what may come upon him. Amen. ANTHONY MANN.

"(Which is not my name)."

I cannot hope to get before the reader, by such things as words, so much as a shadow of the astonishment I felt. I turned the astounding paper about and tried to read it again, but my eyes danced helplessly against the quivering words, my heart beat so frightfully I felt as one in a pulse in my eyeballs, and in the roof of my mouth. I saw the faces about me as one might see queer visages going by in a dream.

"Where did you get this?" I half whispered.

"In the man's pocket," replied the coroner. "Do you understand it? Is this confession true?"

I looked at the dead man's face. I was weak to falling, my wits seemed all abroad for a moment. Should I tell the truth? Had not this man carried me about in his heart through all the years of my life without any return, without my knowledge of it, only to pour his affection out in this strange manner at last? It seemed incredible, beyond belief. Yet, here was this man's statement that my life was the fruit of his own love, and here the man himself had fallen in a struggle to rescue me as he was on his way to offer his life to the law in my behalf!

I felt compelled to believe him in face of this latter fact. Unless he had been insane, unless this stranger's life had ended unguided of reason, then I must be other than I had always supposed myself. My name must be—what must my real name be?

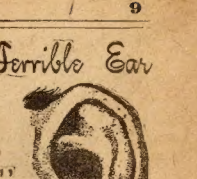
What if this stranger, being tainted in his reason and without home or kindred, had conceived a dream that he should give himself a sacrifice for some one like myself, young and with long promised for enjoyment and achievement, that the giver of so great a gift might be exalted after death, or, may be, placate the Almighty for a wasted life by making so grand an end of it. The thought shook my belief for a moment, but when I remembered what the stranger said to me that night upon the bridge, before he rode away on Dr. Stanwood's horse, I felt that back of it all lay a sufficiently actuating cause, and that the poor, pitiful clay before me had tried to preserve my life because he had first given it me.

But where had he lived, or hidden, that he should thus know, apparently, all that had fallen since that night? Perhaps he had slept in that little deserted house in the orchard that lay in the lap of the hollow at the tip of the prong of water, half way on the road between Magnolia Place and Punta Gorda; that spot where I had first met him! May be he came to that point from Punta Gorda in a rowboat that same morning in which I came by the road! Perhaps he went back to the little house by way of the water, after taking Dr. Stanwood's horse to Garcia, that night when the first great disaster of my life fell upon me!

All these reflections, and many others

(Continued on page eighteen.)

"Those Terrible Ear Noises Have Stopped"



"Those terrible Ear Noises have stopped" is what hundreds of letters are telling me. You remember that on March 18 I offered 300 Treatments for Head Noises, Free, to Chicago Ledger readers and this is the happy result.

Head Noises! What a picture of intolerable suffering these words bring to mind. Reader, if you have Head Noises, I know well that no words of mine can describe the weary misery. But you are the one to appreciate the blessed relief in the words "My Head Noises have stopped." I have been enabled to do this for thousands, and what has been done for others can be done for you, if you will.

The joy and gratitude of the people who received the 300 free treatments offered in this paper last March has been so great and their appeals for friends so urgent that I am going to offer again.

200 Treatments Free

Think of it, you need no longer suffer with these intolerable, roaring noises—the whistling—the escaping steam—the hum of insects—the buzzing—all the weary catalogue of sounds which at times make you feel that they must stop, or you will go insane. Perhaps, too, your hearing is beginning to fail, but whether it has or not, you know in your heart of hearts that it will go and the voice of science warns you in unmistakable terms, **If you Have Head Noises, sooner or later, you will be deaf.**

Here is your opportunity. Send for one of my Free Treatments and see my method which has cured thousands in just your condition. Just drop me a note or a post card asking for a Treatment for Head Noises Free. You will never regret it.

This offer and talk is for YOU. Perhaps you have tried other things and become discouraged. Perhaps you have been told there is no help. Perhaps you are carelessly neglecting your case from day to day thinking it will get well of itself.

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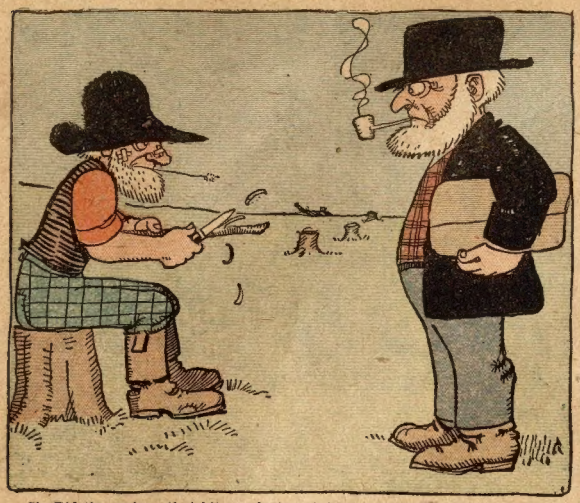


Si—Did the cyclone that hit you last week hurt your house much?
Hi—Dunno! I ain't found it yet!

Only on Invitation.

In the heavily cushioned seats of a train speeding through Massachusetts sat Josiah White and his wife. It was the first time either had been outside the limits of St. Lawrence County, to say nothing of riding in such luxury, with new and ever-changing scenery around them. As the train neared Boston Josiah nudged his wife.

"Abbie," said he, close to her ear, "don't say a word to me and I won't to you while we're going through this city. It ain't polite, unless ye're invited."

"What!"

"Yes. This is Boston, th' place we've heerd so much on as bein' th' city o' th' cultured, and I just overheerd one o' them distinguished-lookin' gentlemen in th' seat ahead tell th' other he wuz goin' to stop off here because he has been invited to speak here tonight."

Unrestrained.

The old tombstone, in the quaint fashion of its kind, implored the passer-by to pause and drop a tear; and no sooner had the beautiful girl read the inscription than she began to weep. But her mother reproved her.

"Cecelia," she exclaimed, "why can you not have more restraint? You are requested merely to drop a tear, and here you have burst into several!"

Taking No Chances.

Mistress (discussing the maid)—Yes, she's leaving to get married. I asked her to get the man to postpone it till I could get another maid, but she said she didn't feel well enough acquainted to ask him to do that!

A Sure-Enough Kid.

Bob was telling about his trip to the country. While there, he had acquired some rustic idioms, and his mother was correcting these as he proceeded.

"Well, we goes up"——

"Went up."

"Went up on the farm"——

"To the farm."

"To the farm, and here we see"——

"We saw."

"We saw a little kid"——

"Little child. Now begin again, and tell it properly."

"Well, we went up to the farm, and there we saw a goat's little child"——

A Greedy Miss.

"Ida's rich uncle in California sent her a lovely brooch with her name set in costly diamonds."

"How delighted she must be."

"Well, she isn't. She's just mad because her parents didn't name her Katherine or Alexandrina."

Matter of Habit.

Ticket Collector—We don't stop here, sir.

Montague Swank (who has just given up a ticket)—Stop where?

Ticket Collector—At the pawnbroker's.

Between Friends.

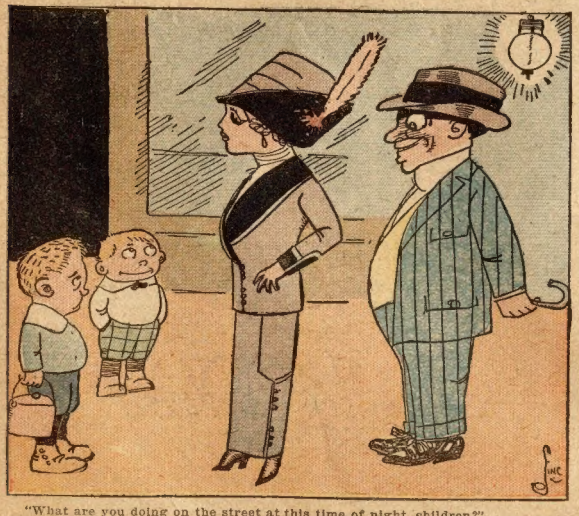
Laura (on her birthday, to friend)—How I wish I were twenty?

Friend—Don't worry about that. You'll be twenty quite long enough soon.

Just About.

"What's the difference between a hospital and a sanitarium?"

"About $20 a week."



"What are you doing on the street at this time of night, children?"
"Ma's sick!"
"And you are going for medicine?"
"No, beer! Pa's got to sit up with her!"

TICKLISH

Beat The Others by One.

Some little girls were boasting of their respective families. They had passed from clothes to personal appearance and finally came to parental dignity. The minister's little girl boasted: "Every package that comes for my papa is marked 'DD.'"

"And every package that comes for my papa is marked 'MD,'" retorted the daughter of the physician.

Then followed a look of contempt from the youngest of the party. "Huh!" she exclaimed. "Every package that comes to our house has three letters on it, 'COD.'"

When Facts Are Foolish.

"Your plot is preposterous," said the manager. "Such a thing could never happen in real life."

"But it did happen in real life," replied the young playwright. "My play is based upon facts."

"Very well, then. It had no business to happen. We don't want facts that haven't sense enough to be plausible."

Knew When to Shut Up.

"Why do they say 'As smart as a steel trap?'" asked the talkative boarder. "I never could see anything particularly intellectual about a steel trap."

"A steel trap is called smart," explained the elderly person in his sweetest voice, "because it knows exactly the right time to shut up."

More might have been said, but in the circumstances it would have seemed unfitting.

Worth Trying.

Mrs. Binks: "The people in the next suite to ours are awfully annoying. They pound on the wall every time our Mamie sings. I wish we knew of some way to drive them out of the flat?"

"Why not have Mamie keep on singing?"

An Exploded Theory.

Meeker—This paper says that mud baths will cure rheumatism.

Seeker—Nonsense! I've run for office three or four times and it didn't do me a bit of good.

At the Live Stock Mart.

Gyer—I once knew a first-class penman who couldn't write his own name.

Myer—How could that be?

Gyer—Why, he worked in the pens at the stockyards.

An Endless Course.

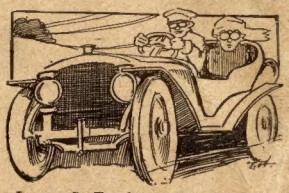
"It looks very much," remarked De Trow, "as if the lecture habit was becoming popular again."

"It has never lost its popularity at our house," said Henry Peck, gloomily.

Relations with the Police.

"Were you ever arrested before?"

"No, judge," replied Plodding Pete; "not since me palmy days, when I was rich enough to own a swift automobile."



Laura—So Frank compares me with a moth? I suppose he thinks that I am a vain, pleasure-loving creature, like the moth.

Harry—And also, like the moth, you're always chewing the rag.

No Chance to Talk.

Gyer—Poor Jaygreen has joined the great silent majority.

Myer—You don't say! When did he die?

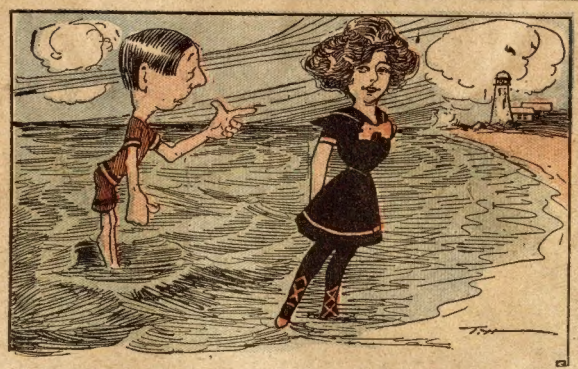
Gyer—Oh, he didn't die. He got married yesterday.

Where He Would Fail.

"Burbank has made the cactus fit for food, hasn't he?"

"I believe so, why?"

"I should like to see what he would do with my wife's biscuits.



George—Don't you think you could learn to love me?
Hilda—Possibly. But it would take all summer, I'm sure, then it would be time to part. There's lots of fellows down here I could learn to love in ten minutes.

His Limitations.

Young Wife (to house decorator)—I hope you will get this finished this afternoon.

Painter—Well, mum, I can do yer swallers and roses right enough; but I must tell yer, if yer want the panels finished this afternoon, it won't run to Coopids.

Billy Bird—These new birds don't care where they lay their eggs.

TACKLES

Lively Sport.

"Well, Bill," said Dawson, as he met Holloway on the avenue, "did you get any good hunting up in Maine?"

"Fine," said Holloway.

"How did that new dog Wilkins gave you work?" asked Dawson.

"Splendid," said Halloway. "Fact is, if it hadn't been for him we wouldn't have had any hunting at all. He ran away at the first shot and we spent four days looking for him."

Without Price.

Borrowell—I tell you, it's hard to be poor.

Harduppe—Gee! I find it the easiest thing in the world.

Awful.

Mrs. Willis—Isn't it awful the way people paw over goods in a store?

Mrs. Gillis—Shocking. I went over to the waist counter this morning and picked up every single garment and there wasn't a one that didn't have the marks where somebody had been handling them.

Dangerous Preoccupation.

"I'm afraid that man is too energetic to succeed in local politics," said Farmer Corntossel.

"It's industry that counts."

"Yes; but he's too busy to devote two or three afternoons a week to having his picture taken."

The Mother—When are you coming down?

The Boy—I dunno. When are you going away?

No Sketch Block.

Son—Father, I've decided to become an artist. Have you any objections?

Father—No; provided you don't draw on me.

Getting Back.

Josh—Don't be a fool.

Bosh—You want a monopoly of the business, do you?

A Hot One.

A long-winded, prosy counselor was arguing a technical case recently before one of the judges of the Superior Court. He had drifted along in such a desultory way that it was hard to keep track of what he was trying to present, and the judge had just vented a very suggestive yawn.

"I trust that I am not unduly trespassing on the time of this court," said the lawyer, with a suspicion of sarcasm in his voice.

"There is some difference," the judge quietly observed, "between treapassing on time and encroaching on eternity."

Faithful Nurse.

"Is that you, doctor?" asks the nurse over the telephone.

"Yes," answers the physician.

"Well, you know you said Mr. Bonder would not show any signs of improvement for five or six days?"

"Yes."

"Well, this is only the second day and he is a great deal better already. Shall I give him something to make him worse for the other three or four days?"

Careful of the Dog.

"How is the water in the bath, Fifi?"

"Please, my lady, it turned baby fairly blue."

"Then don't put Fido in for an hour or so."

On an Auto Ride.

Sentimental Daughter—Oh, father! Look! Isn't the dying day beautiful?

Practical Parent (awakening from nap)—What? Where is it? I didn't know we hit anything!

A Sleuth.

Police Officer—In order that the villain who caught and kissed you in the dark may be traced, we must set our police dog after him. So to trace the scent you must give Nero a kiss.

A Modern Version.

Jack Spratt could eat no fat,
His wife could eat her fill;
She had a bird's wing on her hat,
And Jack—he had the bill.

The Philanthropist.

"He has given away another million dollars."

"That man must have a good heart."

"Either that or an uneasy conscience."

Took the Medal.

They were talking of bravery.

"I crawled up the hill of San Juan with a broken collar bone and a bullet in my leg," said the first man.

"I carried a message across Death Valley and was without water for five days," said the second man.

"And I braved 500 policemen, twenty ushers, six screaming bridesmaids and a raving father, and set up my flashlight apparatus in a fashionable church," said the pallid photographer.

And without further question they handed him the medal.

Teacher—When was Rome built?

Billy—In the night.

Teacher—Why, Billy?

Billy—Well, my pa always says that Rome wasn't built in a day.

Then He Fled.

"Do you care much for history, Miss Gusher?"

"I dote on it, Mr. Slimpson!"

"And what do you think of Hannibal?"

"Oh, I thought we were discussing history. I've never been to Hannibal, but of course, I know it is the former home of Mark Twain."

At 2 A. M.

Goodman (sententiously)—It is the little things that trouble us.

Rounder—Sure! It's always easier to find the house than to locate the keyhole.

Miss Black—Mr. Gumly is so chivalrous!

Mr. White—Did he save your life?

Miss Black—No; but when that shower came on yesterday he rushed for an umbrella and saved me from getting my bathing suit wet.

Wrong House.

"Say, boss, I worked off some of that cold-storage butter today," said the new clerk, with the air of one who expected a compliment.

"Indeed! Well, that's good! Who drew the prize?" said the pleased grocer, for it was getting to be a difficult thing to do.

"Why, I sent it to Mrs. Hash around on Broad street."

"Oh, thundering guns!" exclaimed the grocer, his tone changed and his face drawn in a pucker. "Why, you blamed idiot, I board at that woman's house!"

Practiced but Not Perfect.

Jack—I'll be frank with you. You are not the first girl I've kissed by any means.

Maud—And I'll be equally frank with you. You have a great deal to learn even at that.

Just a Way He Had.

"I suppose," growled the pessimist, "you believe in taking things as they come, don't you?"

"Only when I don't consider them worth going after," replied the optimist.

Edward's Deduction.

"Edward, you must eat the crusts of your bread."

"Did you eat crusts when you were a little boy?"

"Why, certainly, I did."

"And is that why you are a crusty old bachelor now, uncle?"

Consistency of Criticism.

"There's one thing I don't like about Brown."

"What is that?"

"Why, the confounded, low browed, half-baked idiot is always calling somebody names."

Mildly Interested.

"What was that tiresome old explorer talking about," inquired the languid lady.

"Progressive Patagonia."

"And how do you play it?"

Between Octogenarians.

"I understand they sentenced him to life imprisonment?"

"Well, no; it wasn't as bad as that. He got only ninety-nine years."

Dolly—The motor-boat is superior to the canoe even if we do have to carry a chaperon.

Dick—I should say so. The "chug-chug" makes such a racket she couldn't hear a smack to save herself.

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MADELINE DARE'S VENGEANCE, OR THE UNWRITTEN LAW.

By WELDON J. COBB.

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Begun in No. 21, May 27. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XII.
A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.

ONE day—two days. Madeline Dare sat at the window of the room where she last saw her missing husband, gazing out upon the rain - swept street with blank, wearied eyes.

Each succeeding twenty-four hours had enforced the conviction that she was a deserted wife, that the man for whom she had sacrificed so much had abandoned her.

"A deserted wife," she had murmured over and over to herself through long sleepless hours, and the utterance was tinged with bitterness.

Was it her fate that she should ever have the cup of peace and happiness dashed from her parched lips. And then resentment against all the world came into her heart. Her mirror told her that she was possessed of charms even beyond the average. And yet her beauty, the free offering of all the deep devotion of which her patient willing soul was capable, had been repelled and spurned.

"It is my fate," she decided at last, in desperation.

It was a cold solace to realize that she had done her duty. At the first she had been indignant, shocked at the conduct of Dare in leaving her practically penniless. Then thinking of his weak speculative nature, she had condoned his offense. She hoped that when he had squandered the last of the little hoard he would return to her, abject, penitent, with his lesson learned, and willing thenceforth to accept her guidance.

The last hope in her heart was crushed, however, in this very hour. A visitor appeared, a serious faced man, who bowed to her respectfully, but in a business like way, as she ushered him into the little sitting room.

"My task is completed, Mrs. Dare," he announced.

Madeline flushed and paled by turns. Mingled suspense and hope showed in her expressive face.

"You have not—have not found my husband?"

"No, madame."

"Nor a trace of him?"

"Nothing," answered the detective lawyer with a settled nod. "Mr. Dare has disappeared utterly."

"If there could have been foul play!" she suggested. "If he could have been led away to a distance, or into some trouble by his gambling companions?"

"There was no motive," interrupted the detective definitely.

"You mean?"

"He had squandered his means. They had plucked him and were through with him. Do you wish my theory?"

"If you please."

"Mr. Dare lost a large amount of money. He tried to recoup himself and lost more. He was desperate and disheartened. From all I learn of him, he was of a thoughtless, impulsive nature. He was also a coward. He feared to face consequences, and he has fled to new scenes and new companions."

Madeline bowed her head in a troubled way. At last she asked:

"I told you about some jewelry."

"Yes," nodded the detective. "I found where he sold a part of it for ready money, in the town here."

"And gambled it away like the other money?"

"No, he did not return to the club."

"Then he has indeed, abandoned me," murmured Madeline. "Your search is ended," she said to the detective. "It is a painful subject to me, and I wish no publicity."

"You can rely on my secrecy," said her visitor, and Madeline paid him and was left alone to her misery.

It was a cruelly hard situation. The days that followed for one month, slowly brought her strong mind to bear on affairs in a practical way. She had decided to give her recreant husband a fair chance.

"If he sends no word to me within a month," she said, "I will forget him. Forgive him? Yes, that too, for Elinor's sake. Then to go to some far away spot and begin life all over again."

The day dawned when that prescribed period of probation was passed. In her old business like way Madeline adjusted her affairs. She had some money of her own, quite a little sum saved up during her service with Elinor Rossiter, at Windsor. She was able to pay what was owing in the village.

Madeline had gone to the railroad station to secure time tables. Her mind was made up to go far from the places where her sad young life had been lived. It was on her return home as she passed into a side street, that a scene attracted her attention that in one magical thrilling moment of time aroused new and important issues of being.

Two men were before her. One was a local officer of the law. He was pushing ahead of him and threatening with his club a poor, ragged, staggering semblance of humanity, with the words:

"Now, you get out of town!"

"Whaffore your town?" mumbled the maudlin derelict.

"Double quick, now!"

"Alright. Any town suits me, if I can get the fiery liquor that burns out body and brain—whoo!"

With a scream almost unearthly the drunkard waved his hand in a frenzied way and uttered a hideous curdling laugh. As he started to reel across the street, his face was turned for a moment, and Madeline noticed it.

"Great heavens!" she gasped, and stood like one turned to stone.

Could it be, or was it some fancied resemblance? With a shock that stilled her heart beats, Madeline Dare recognized the Rev. Mr. Thurston!

When last she had seen him he had been a walking miracle of pleasing neatness, even a trifle over the line towards foppishness. On that occasion his whole appearance had been that of an earnest enthusiastic messenger of the gospel, with a soul full of ardent love for his fellow man.

Now—!

Madeline shuddered. It was as if some evil power had dragged down a pure beautiful image from a lofty pedestal into the dregs and mire of hell itself.

The Rev. Mr. Thurston was in rags. His battered attire was crusted with grime and dirt. His face was bloated, unshaven, his eyes filled with a wild maniacal glare that terrified. Idols of clay!—the recreant husband; the fallen angel of divinity! A choking sob escaped the lips of the bewildered and appalled woman.

The officer gave a last warning twirl of his club, with the words:

"Go on, now!"

"I'm going on—on, on, on, to the brink! To the last ditch. Lost—accursed!" shrieked the derelict, and again he threw up his arms in wild meaningless gesticulations, and again he uttered that piercing scream of a tortured soul.

"Oh, Mr. Thurston! Mr. Thurston!" cried Madeline, irresistibly aroused from her torpor of stupefaction.

The officer stared at this respectable, well-dressed woman rushing forward and seizing the ragged arm of the wretched, miserable drunkard.

The latter wavered to and fro. He stared at Madeline with blear, unseeing eyes.

"Ha! ha!" he jeered. "Another female missionary trying to reform the devil! Avoid me for fear of a scar! Back woman, I am as the leper! My touch is poison. I am doomed! doomed! doomed!

"Do you not remember me?" hurried on Madeline breathlessly. "Oh, sir! what does this mean—you, the Rev. Mr. Thurston, a clergyman, a good and holy man—in this condition? Oh, sir—what does it mean?"

"Me a minister? me the good and holy?" screamed Thurston. "Me? No! That was before my soul died and I sold myself to the devil!"

"Do you not remember?" pursued Madeline in a gentle pitiful tone. "You performed the marriage ceremony at Bristol where I was the bride."

"Ceremony? Farce!" shouted Mr. Thurston. "I was no clergyman, I had no right or call. It was a fraud. Don't you see: Thurston, the drunkard! Thurston, the lost soul!"

"Then—the—marriage—was—not—legal?" faltered forth Madeline, a new and horrible suspicion of infamy and deception on the part of Cyril Dare assailing her mind.

"Legal?" cried Mr. Thurston derisively. "Don't I tell you it was a farce, a fraud—worse, a crime! and I am lost! doomed! accursed!"

Madeline turned cold, her face grew colorless. At this last blow of cruel fate she sank senseless and crushed to the ground.

CHAPTER XIII.
DEAD TO THE WORLD.

"Poor soul! Are you better?"

Madeline Dare turned a wan, colorless face to her questioner, and tried to smile her gratitude and interest in the question. Then her hands were folded over the white counterpane and she closed her eyes wearily.

"You have been very, very kind to me," she said.

"Don't think or speak of that," replied the kind-hearted landlady of the apartments the Dares had occupied since coming to the summer resort village. "I have felt for a month that you were in some trouble. You shut yourself so away from everybody, though, I did not like to intrude on you. Now I think I understand your difficulties. I feel very sorry for you. I would do all I could to help you."

"There is no help for me," murmured Madeline in a low broken tone.

"Don't say that, dear!" urged her companion.

"I must say it, for it is true."

"There is always hope. It is darkest always before the dawn, you know. Your husband may come back."

A wave of bitter suffering and regret crossed the face of the deserted wife.

"No, he will never come back," she said. "We two shall never meet again until I seek him. Then—!"

The landlady uttered quite a cry of consternation, almost of terror. The sudden change in the face of Madeline thrilled her. There seemed to come into the stern accusing features a certain expression that would have fitted some high queen of tragedy.

"Whatever is in your mind?" she faltered. Don't look that way, dear. It is true he has left you, but—"

Madeline motioned the woman to silence. For over a week she had lain where she now was. When the appalling discovery had come to Madeline Dare that she was not legally wedded to the ex-convict and fugitive, Dare, she had gone down under the shock utterly crushed.

They had removed her to the only home she knew. Now she was convalescent. Returning health and strength were coming to her. There was, however, no soothing healing balm for her wounded soul.

"Listen," she said after a pause to her compassionate nurse. "I do not wish to hear of the past. You have surmised the situation aright. I am an abandoned wife. A wife, did I say? No—a cruelly wronged woman! I am going away to lose myself!"

"Oh, my dear, don't do anything rash that you may regret afterwards! If any one should inquire about you after you are gone—"

"No one will inquire," interrupted Madeline definitely.

"They may, you know."

"No, I have not a living friend in the world."

"Oh, I am so sorry for you!"

"I am going away to lose myself, to hide—for a year."

A gleam of intelligence came into the landlady's eyes. She nodded in a womanly way, and sighed.

"You will take on that responsibility, too?" she said, in a low tone.

"I will go through with my duty, be the outcome what it may," replied Madeline fixedly. "If a child is born to me, I will accept the burden. Grudgingly, for I can never love it. But, remembering my own lonely life, it shall at least have all the care I can purchase for it. Two lives then—two lonely, wretched lives! After that—one motive in life, one consuming ever-present hope—to find the man who deserted me."

"Your husband?"

"He is not my husband."

"Then why do you seek him?"

"I seek him," replied Madeline, slowly, solemnly, startlingly—"to kill him!"

"Mercy me!" gasped the horrified landlady, and fell to trembling at the strange perversity of her patient.

"Leave me to myself, please, Mrs. Ross," pleaded Madeline, and she buried her head in the pillows and tried to shut out the tormenting thoughts that assailed her soul.

She was a changed woman from the old Madeline, when she left the house where she had hoped for happiness and had found only heart wreck and storm. Into the soul of the deserted wife there had come a firm fixed purpose. She had told the landlady that she would seek Cyril Dare, and when she found him she would kill him. She meant it. She had not spoken as a weak vacillating woman aroused to fleeting emotion, but as a being driven to the last verge of hopeless despair.

Madeline stored what of her belongings she cared for in a suit case, settled her bill with the landlady and left the house. Ever since she had last met the Rev. Mr. Thurston she had the thought of his terrible declaration constantly in her mind. She decided that he had been lured by Dare to perform a mock marriage. Was it not the clergyman's confession that the wedding at Bristol had been a farce!

Madeline had changed her plans. She concluded that she would not go West, but South. She had quite a neat little

sum of money. She planned out to spend it carefully.

A steamer went down the riv[illegible] two hundred miles, and she enter[illegible] name upon the passenger list for th[illegible] trip. She tried to divert her mind by watching the pleasant summer scenery as the boat started away from Glendale, but only sadness, regret and misery occupied her though[illegible]

It was about nine o'c[illegible] that evening. There was faint moonlight. The night was beautiful, the air balmy. Madeline sat apart near the stern of the boat, listlessly noticing the many passengers promenading the [illegible]

Suddenly there was a shrill signal whistle, and an officer of the boat flashed by her towards the bow with the quick sharp word[illegible]

"Dam[illegible]

A terrific crash followed. The great steamer seemed lifted from the water, and was sent tipping to one side. The passengers, huddled together, joined in a series of frightened shouts and screams.

"A collision!" Madeline heard some one cry out.

Then as the boat careened again, with a dozen or more she was crowded, crushed to one side. The rail gave way, and she found herself struggling for life with others in the dark central current of the stream.

Boats were put out from shore. Madeline saw scores of frightened passengers leap from the dismantled, unmanageable steamer. She saw several sink under the water. A small craft from shore rescued her and four others.

She did not wait on the shore to be questioned by eager excited witnesses of the accident. She lingered only long enough to learn that the steamer had sunk. Her suit case was gone. Many had perished. Madeline found shelter in a town near by.

The next morning, her clothing dried, she took a train from the place. She glanced over a newspaper containing a thrilling account of the accident.

Her own name, taken from the shipping office book, was in the list of those who had perished.

"Strange!" murmured Madeline bitterly. "He, the man who wrecked my life, dead to the world at the prison, and now, myself—better so. Let the cruel past lie in the watery grave of Madeline Dare!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE UNWRITTEN LAW.

"It is all arranged?"

"Yes, madam."

"I may come to see you personally once in a while. I may never return. I may send you remittances regularly every quarter. Something may transpire that may prevent my ever communicating with you again. I am a plain practical, truthful woman. I wish this matter clearly understood, so that you will not regret dealing with me nor have occasion to say that I deceived you!"

"I understand the arrangement perfectly, madam," was the reply.

Nearly two years had passed by since Madeline Dare had allowed the announcement of her death in the terrible steamboat collision to go unrefuted. Now she sat in the best room of a large but plain cottage set in the center of a beautiful rose garden, not far from the district where she had met and lost her recreant husband.

Those two years had been dull spiritless reaches of time for the lonely Madeline. She had gone South, but some unaccountable and irresistible attraction had drawn her back to the vicinity where so much that was tragic had happened in her young life.

About fifty miles from Glendale, and over double that distance from the city, she had found a bustling, thriving town named Afton. There were a great many industrial establishments in the place. Madeline was a proficient stenographer and typist. For six months she earned a liberal salary. Then she mysteriously disappeared for a like space of time.

When Madeline returned to Afton she was thinner and paler than before. No one, however, tried to pry into her affairs. Afton was a working town made up mainly of working folks, and these minded their own business distinctly. She was supposed to be a widow, had few acquaintances and made no close friends. At her place of work her quiet womanly dignity won the respect of her employers. She was valued as a trusted and efficient employe, and her life drifted on in quiet unbroken evenness and monotony.

Finally Madeline for a second time gave up her position at the factory. This time the manager of the business made it a serious and earnest point to attempt to dissuade her from going. He praised her work, offered her a large increase in wages, and promised further future preferment, but Madeline quietly but firmly explained that personal business reasons made it necessary for her to remove to the city.

She soon made all her arrangements to that effect. Now she sat in the cottage described, conversing with a sweet-faced lady of about thirty. Outside on a patch of green lawn a nurse sat on a piece of carpet surrounded by four children. One of them was just able to toddle about, a second could stand upon its feet by clinging to its baby carriage. Two much younger lay on pillows, kicking their pretty pink feet in the air and crowing merrily as the nurse played with them.

One of these was the child of Cyril and Madeline Dare. Concerning the child she and the sweet faced lady were now conversing.

"It is understood, madam, all that you say," the latter was remarking. "At Rest Cottage your little one shall have a pleasant home and my motherly care. If you never return for it, we shall adopt it. You have my promise for that, for both my husband and myself are in love with 'the little angel.'"

"I shall always send you money—just as you are paid for the other children," said Madeline,—"that is, as long as I am able to earn it."

"And you will come occasionally to see the little darling?" pressed the lady wistfully.

"I think not. No," declared Madeline stonily, "I must steel my heart against all love and tenderness, I have a mission to perform. That must be the one thought of my life now."

Mrs. Walden looked sad and sorry. She could read a tragic mystery in the cold, beautiful woman, who surrendered her only child to the care of strangers without a regret.

"Well, dear," she said with a deep sigh, "depend upon me. We are not mercenary. We lost all our children, and my husband and I longed for some little ones about us. Your little one shall be as happy as we can make her."

"Legal?" cried Mr. Thurston, "don't I tell you it was a farce!"

"I believe that," responded Madeline, "and I thank you."

"What shall we call her?"

A spasm of pain crossed Madeline's face. She repressed it speedily.

"Call her—Elinor," she said, and arose to leave.

"You will see the little one before you go?" asked Mrs. Walden.

"No, no, I cannot!" said Madeline hurriedly.

"Just to carry fresh and bright with you the memory of her sweet midget face?"

"Woman, I dare not!" cried Madeline sternly. "Do not torture me. Good-by."

She left the spot and never turned to look back. The joyous cries of the little babes came echoing to her ears, but Madeline went the faster.

"It must not be, it must not be!" she whispered fiercely to herself. "No, no—all sentiment must now be dead, except—vengeance."

Two days later Madeline Dare secured a room in a quiet part of the great city. At the end of the week she started out upon the quest that had brought her to the busy metropolis.

She did not know that her recreant husband was in Chicago. It just chanced to be the nearest city to Glendale. He might have gone to New York, he might have fled to foreign parts.

"Near or far, I shall find him," she said ceaselessly to herself.

The discovery came more quickly than she had dreamed. She was passing along the busiest street in the great metropolis just at eventide. She was planning to start a systematic search for Cyril Dare on the morrow.

Suddenly—

She just chanced to glance at the brilliant gold-lettered windows of a grand floor office in a vast building which was a marvel of plate glass and steel.

The dying sun flamed across a name there, a name that seemed to flaunt, to deride her with its suggestions of opulence.

This was what Madeline read:

"Cyril Dare & Co., Stocks & Grain, Members of the N. Y. Stock Exchange, N. Y. Cotton Exchange, Chicago Board of Trade, Chicago Stock Exchange."

Her face went dead white. She leaned against an electric light post for support, dazzled, breathless.

"I have found him at last!" she gasped. "I have found the man who wrecked my life and sent little Elinor nameless into the world. I have found him, and he must pay the penalty. It is the Unwritten Law!"

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* * *

Proud of Brown.

"That intelligent-looking boy there," said the pedagogue to the top-hatted parent he was showing over the school premises, "is Brown. I am proud of Brown. I have inculcated in him the love of learning to such an extent that he now prefers study to play. I expect at this moment he is writing Timmin's Latin prose on that sheet of paper there, while all the other pupils are at play. I will ascertain.'

He called the lad to him.

"Brown," he said, "let us see the result of your industry."

"I—I'd rather not, sir," blushed Brown.

"Note his modesty," whispered the schoolmaster. "Come, Brown, let me see what you have been writing."

Still the boy demurred. But the schoolmaster insisted, and forcefully appropriated the paper. And there, in neat imitation of feminine handwriting, he read the following:

"Please excuse my son James from school today. He is wanted at home."

* * *

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Ever Eat a Wampus?

The waiter was of the garrulous type that thinks every patron should eat the things the waiter likes, insists on telling each customer what on the bill of fare is good and shows resentment if his advice is not accepted.

Two women evidently well to do and accustomed to good surroundings but strangers to that restaurant and its four-page blanket sheet bill of fare were working down through the long lists of French-German-English names of dishes.

"We have some extra fine English beef soup today. I just served a portion to Professor Corbino; he always has it with a dish of grated cheese," the waiter volunteered, according to the New York Sun.

Neither woman looked up. English beef soup evidently had not made a hit. The waiter brushed an imaginary crumb from the cloth, poured more water into the glasses and looked annoyed.

"We have fine corn beef an' cabbage; it's our special on Wednesday; all our beef corned on the premises and new hot-house cabbage from Florida."

Still no sign from the women that they were not deaf mutes. The waiter looked out of the window, fidgeted a moment, tried to restrain himself but couldn't.

"How about some oysters or clams? Our chef's cocktail sauce is——"

"Oh, I know what I want," broke in one of the women with a fine simulation of animation. "I haven't had a wampus this year and I just dote on wampuses." Then to the waiter: "Bring me a nice, medium sized wampus broiled brown, but not scorched, and be sure it's fat. Have it dressed with drawn butter and serve the toast separately and dry." Then to her companion: "Will you have a wampus, or shall one with some vegetables and a salad do for both?"

The companion thought one would be enough, and both beamed on the waiter, who was scratching his ear and racing his eyes up and down the bill of fare, his forehead wrinkled in perplexity.

"I don't see none of them things on this bill, mum," he pleaded. "Has that what you call it any other name? I don't think I ever heard it called that before."

"Surely a restaurant of this class has wampuses. Why, this is just the season when they are best. Go ask the head waiter." And as the waiter departed: "Be sure it's a fat one. If the head waiter can't help you go to the chef. He may have one hid in the icebox for me. Tell him I'll pay double price for it, but be sure it's fat."

By the time the waiter had been called down for a numskull by the head waiter and cussed out of the kitchen by the cook the women had found what they wanted and were ready to order.

"The chef says there ain't no such thing as wampuses," the waiter started to explain.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter. I've changed my mind anyway," said the woman. "Bring us consomme, scallops and bacon, rare roast beef, baked potatoes, ice cream and coffee."

Mrs. Billie's Baby.

"Before I was married and had a baby of my own," said Mrs. Billie, "nothing used to bore me so much as other women's babies."

"I know," said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"It seemed to me that all babies were bad enough to have to look at, but were even worse to listen to," said Mrs. Billie.

"Quite so," said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"And when they were 'shown off' it was worst of all. I used to go 'goose flesh' when that began," said Mrs. Billie.

"Me too," said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"But then the average baby is an awful thing. And, even though I do say it as shouldn't, my baby is not an average baby," said Mrs. Billie.

"Of course not," said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"In the first place, Augustus doesn't look like an average baby, does he?" said Mrs. Billie.

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"And in the second place, Augustus doesn't talk like one, either," said Mrs. Billie.

"I believe it," said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"I just want you to hear the way he imitates the animals," said Mrs. Billie.

"Imitates the animals?" said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"Yes, all the animals," said Mrs. Billie.

"Good gracious!" said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"It is wonderful," said Mrs. Billie.

"It must be," said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"Just listen to this," said Mrs. Billie. "Augustus, how does the bow-wow go?"

"Blah! Blah!" said Augustus.

"See!" said Mrs. Billie. "He knows!"

"Wonderful!" said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"Augustus," said Mrs. Billie, "how does the pussy cat go?"

"Blah! Blah!" said Augustus.

"See?" said Mrs. Billie. "That's right."

"Wonderful!" said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"Augustus," said Mrs. Billie, "how does the poll parrot go?"

"Blah! Blah!" said Augustus.

"See!" said Mrs. Billie. "He never makes a mistake."

"Wonderful!" said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"And now the hardest of all, said Mrs. Billie. "Augustus, how does the choo-choo car go?"

"Blah! Blah!" said Augustus.

"See!" said Mrs. Billie. "Isn't it marvelous?"

"It certainly is," said Mrs. Van Martyr. "But the choo-choo car reminds me that I have to catch a train. I must go. I am not surprised that you are proud of your child. As I have said, he is—er—wonderful. Good-by, dear."

"Good-by," said Mrs. Billie.

"Good-by, Augustus," said Mrs. Van Martyr.

"Say good-by to the lady, Augustus," said Mrs. Billie.

"Blah! Blah!" said Augustus.

"See!" said Mrs. Billie. "Isn't that cute? He knows that, too!"—Smart Set.

A State-ly Romance.

She was a very pretty—Miss.
Her name was—Del.
His name was—Cal.
She told him to ask her—Pa.
Father pronounced him —Ok.
His wealth was in—Ore.
They were married in an—Ark.
The number of wedding guests was—Tenn.
At sight of the dinner they said—O.
All of them passed their plates for—Mo.
Then all went to church to attend—Mass.
By and by he became—Ill.
She sent for an—Md.
The doctor's name was—Mont.
Asked if the man could recover, he said, "He—Kan."
Finally, in order to get food, she had to—Wash
If you don't believe this, ask—Me.
It is true, I assure—U.

Baldwin—This ring I'm giving Luella is two horse power.

Wright—Two horse power? What do you mean?

Baldwin—It cost all I made driving a team all winter.

Brief Yarns.

"Lincoln," said a speaker at a banquet "could not stand tedious writing in others. He once condemned for its tediousness a Greek history, whereupon a diplomat took him to task. 'The author of that history, Mr. President,' he said 'is one of the profoundest scholars of the age. Indeed, it may be doubted whether any man of our generation has plunged more deeply in the sacred fount of learning.' 'Yes, or come up drier,' said Lincoln."

George W. Perkins was giving advice to young men. "Never undertake," he said, "to do too much. In applying for a position it is almost better to promise too little than too much. Remember the model. An old chap applied to a New York artist for the post of model. 'Well,' said the artist, 'what do you sit for?' 'Oh, anything, sir,' said the model, fingering his beard nervously. 'Anything you like, sir. Landscape, if necessary.'"

A student at the Western Reserve University suffers from obesity; it appears that even professors do not love a fat man. After a particularly unsuccessful recitation in an English course, the professor said: "Alas, Mr. Blank! You are better fed than taught." "That's right, professor," sighed the youth, subsiding heavily. "You teach me—I feed myself."

The Sleepy Man's Name.

During the morning prior to the opening of the Democratic National Convention, a special meeting of those delegates already arrived was held to discuss and vote on some preliminary measures. These met in a smaller hall, opposite the convention hall; and when they were all assembled in the stuffy room, one of the members leaned back wearily in his chair and promptly fell asleep.

After an hour's session, the chairman called a vote on a certain measure. All responded but the sleeper, whose snores now and then echoed through the room.

"Here! wake that man up!" demanded the chairman, at this point. "What's his name, anyway?"

No one being able to tell, and no one following the chairman's order to wake the sleeper up, that functionary at once called upon a ballot clerk to carry out the order. So accordingly the clerk hurried down the aisle to the dozer, shook him vigorously by the arm, asking him his name the while.

With a broken snore that perforated the atmosphere, the sleeper awoke.

"What's his name?" again called out the impatient cnairman.

At this, the clerk straightened up from the unknown member's chair, and announced, to the accompaniment of a roar of laughter.

"Mr. Chairman, he says his name is Knapp!"

Justice White's Double.

"Edward Douglas White, the chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, has a double in the person of Archie M. Stevenson, a well-known Denver lawyer and politician," said A. C. Campbell. "Their similarity in appearance has caused the new chief justice more than one interesting experience and these are frequently told by the members of the Supreme Court.

"Stevenson was a frequent visitor to Washington when he held the balance of political power in the Republican party in Colorado, and it was on these occasions that the justice was frequently mistaken for the Denver politician.

"I remember the occasion when the justice and the politician first met each other. Justice White spied Stevenson sitting in an obscure corner of the courtroom one day when the court was in session. He asked Chief Justice Brewer who the big man with curly hair was and he was informed it was Big Steve, the Colorado politician.

"'I want to meet him,' said Justice White, and after the court adjourned Justice Brewer made the introduction.

"'I'm very glad to meet you,' said Justice White after the formalities were finished. 'I'll appreciate it very much if you will notify me hereafter when you arrive in town and also let me know when you depart.'

"Justice White did not at once explain the peculiar request. After Stevenson had departed he gave the information to his companion.

"'I want to keep off the streets while that man is in town,' said the justice. 'I'm tired of people slapping me on the back and saying: "Hello, Steve, where'n the h— did you come from?"'"

A Diplomatist.

As Mr. Compton looked down at his waistcoat he discovered that it lacked a button. "And I asked my wife to sew it on more firmly, last night," he said to his commuter neighbor in the train. "I don't see how she forgot it."

"Don't ever ask her to mend anything," said his friend. "I learned a better way before I'd been married a year. When I want anything mended, say a shirt, for instance, I take it under my arm, all mussed up, and open the closet door and sing out to my wife, 'Where's the ragbag, Peggy?'

"'What do you want of the ragbag?' she'll ask me.

"'Oh, I thought I'd throw this away,' I tell her, and squeeze it a little tighter under my arm.

"'Let me see what you have there,' she'll say, and I'll mutter something about 'worn-out old things!' while I hand it to her.

"'Why, James Holland!' she'll say, when she's spread it out and looked it over in a hurry, 'I am surprised at you! This is perfectly good. It doesn't need a single thing except——' And then and there she sits down to mend it, looking as if I'd made her a present."

Why She Hesitated.

An interesting case happened in a nearby court in which a young woman was suing her ex-sweetheart for breach of promise.

"Did the defendant ever sit very close to you?" she was asked.

"Yes, sir."

"How close?"

"So close that one chair was all the settin' room we needed."

"And you say he frequently put his arm around you?"

"No, I didn't. I said he put both arms around me."

"Did he hug you hard?"

"Yes, he did. I came purty near hollerin'."

"Why didn't you?"

"Well, 'cause I was afeerd he'd stop hugging me."

Old Query Revived.

A farmer finds a $1 bill and appropriates it by right of discovery to himself. He goes to town and pays it to a newspaper man on what he owed him; the newspaper man hands it over to a merchant to settle his account; the merchant pays his meat bill with it, and the butcher pays it back to the original finder to finish paying for a calf he had bought, after which the farmer takes it to the bank and discovers it to be counterfeit, and on the ensuing Sunday puts it into the missionary collection. Query: Are all these debts canceled by the spurious $1?

The House-Boat Boys;

Or, Floating Down to Dixie

By St. George Rathborne

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CHAPTER VII.

A WILD STORM.

"HOW does it look to you—think we can make the rifle today?" asked Thad, as they floated down the stream, very broad and swollen at this point, as the low shores allowed the water just that much more expanse—further up, the Ohio is confined by hills that prevent its spreading to any great extent, even in the Spring freshets.

Maurice knew what he meant, for they had only the one thought in mind just now, and that was getting into the Mississippi.

He drew out his charts and studied them to make sure he was right, though from frequent use he knew the same by heart.

"I can see no reason why we shouldn't. As near as I can make out we're now something like twenty-three miles above Cairo, and at the rate we're sailing along we ought to pass there shortly after noon—say by two o'clock anyway. That will give us time to move down a few miles, and have our first night on the greatest of American rivers he remarked.

"I'm a little bit worried as to how we'll get on. You see I've heard so much about the tricks of the big river that I'm nervous," admitted Thad.

"Oh! piffle. It can't be much worse than the old Ohio when she gets on a bender, and we've seen some pretty big ones in our time. We'll come out all right, never fear, old chap. Every day will have to look out for itself. What's the use of borrowing trouble? Not any for me. Now, what could be finer than this view, for instance?" sweeping his hand around to include land and water, with the sun dimpling the little waves.

"Nothing on earth; it's just grand, that's a fact, and I'm a fool for thinking anything can get the better of a couple of fellows like you and me when we've got our war clothes on. Hurra for We, Us and Company, not forgetting the old Tramp. Say, she's behaving herself some, eh, pard?" laughed Thad, his face all wreathed in genial smiles again.

"She's all right, and a credit to your workmanship. A little cool, and inclined to be draughty on a windy night, but taken all in all a thing of beauty and a Joy forever. Here's to her—may she never be broken up into kindling-wood."

So they joked and chatted as the day wore along.

Nothing escaped their eagle eyes on the shore, and from time to time one would draw the attention of the other to some point of especial interest—it might be the peculiar formation of a point of land, some trees, a swamp with hanging Spanish moss, which, however, was nothing to what they would see further south—or perhaps it was some negro cabin on an elevation, with the pickaninnies playing by the door, and the strapping woman of the household leaning against the post, always smoking her clay pipe.

Maurice, with the hunter instinct, watched the flight of an osprey that was circling the river brink with an eye to dinner; and later on observed an eagle drop down into a flock of ducks, from which he evidently took his usual toll; as presently he flew heavily away, with some dark object dangling below.

About noon they had a little lunch. Thad making a pot of coffee, and otherwise the meal was called in local parlance a "snack," which would seem to mean a pickup affair that could be eaten standing if necessary.

They wished to get this duty out of the way, for by the signs it was believed that they must be approaching Cairo, and as the junction of the two rivers is a turbulent place, with considerable craft moving about, the boys considered it wise to have their full attention fixed upon their movements.

After all it was a mere nothing—they simply turned a point and found themselves upon a much wider stretch of water—and this was the famous Mississippi!

Now they were really heading south, and no matter how much colder the weather grew it could not freeze them in and stop their flight to the desired port.

Just as Maurice had figured it was two in the afternoon when they could really and truly say they were afloat on the big river; and in about two hours they began to cast their eyes along the shore seeking a favorable place to tie up for the coming night—the mere thought of being adrift upon that immense yellow flood after sunset was appalling to them, though possibly by degrees they might become accustomed to the rolling tide that it would cease to have the same sensation of alarm for them.

It was almost dark before they discovered a convenient tree close enough to the water's edge to serve their purpose; for evidently the river during its periodical seasons of flood had torn all growth on the lower banks away.

Thad climbed up to this friendly trunk and slipped the cable around its base.

The boys sat there on deck for some little time watching the last flickering red die out of the western heavens; and when the panorama had come to its logical conclusion, with a sigh they entered the cabin to prepare supper.

In this manner did they spend their first night upon the Father of Waters, and it was as peaceful as any they ever knew; the river sang merrily as its little wavelets washed up against the sides of the shanty-boat, the air was almost balmy in its touch, coming from the the south where the cotton fields and wilderness of pines lay; and all together the boys felt that they had been exceedingly foolish to imagine that anything terrible could await them upon the bosom of this majestic stream.

Ah! wait until the same river is seen under different conditions, and perhaps the old opinion may be revived with redoubled force; for the Mississippi in the throes of a westerly storm is a sight to appall the stoutest heart.

When morning came they were soon under way again, and reaching out for another stretch toward that genial clime that seemed beckoning them onward.

Now they could notice quite a difference in the stage of the current, for with the increased volume of water it seemed that they were being borne onward faster than at any other time in the past.

All the way down it was policy on their part to hug the eastern shore; indeed, to attempt to cross that billowing flood with such a frail craft would have seemed the height of foolishness both boys thought, nor would they have any object in so doing.

The river makes many wonderful twists and turns, sometimes seeming to flow almost due north as it follows its intricate channel; for it is a law of nature that water always pursues the easiest route, and seeks its own level.

Maurice had during the morning commented on the balmy feeling in the air, whereupon the weather sharp, Thad, had warned him solemnly that there was a great change coming within twenty hours, perhaps much less, for all signs pointed to cold and windy weather; so much faith did Maurice place in this prediction of his chum that he insisted upon tying up earlier than usual that afternoon so that they could lay in an abundance of firewood.

It is not often that a weather prophet has so much honor in his own family; and really Maurice never did a wiser thing in his life than when he thus provided for a bad spell to come on the strength of Thad's knowledge of floating clouds and such signs.

For the storm descended upon them that very night, and coming off the river gave them something of a fright, lest they be wrecked thus early in their voyage down the big water.

Given two miles of river over which to sweep with fury, and a forty mile an hour gale can kick up a tremendous sea, besides penetrating every crack and cranny to be found in a flimsy cabin, chilling the very marrow of the sleepers.

It was about two in the morning when Maurice awoke to find the boat pitching violently, and himself shivering with cold; for they had let the fire die out on retiring, such was the heat of the cabin.

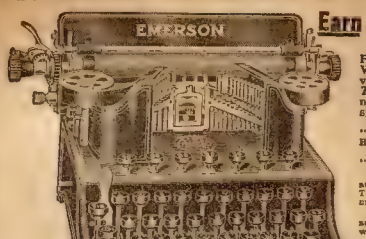
"Hi! here, show a leg, Thad. There's something doing, and I rather reckon your plagued old storm's arrived ahead of time. D'ye want to freeze to death, boy? Pile out and let's get a fire started. Then we'd better make sure our cable's going to hold, for if we broke loose in this howling sea it'd be good-by to our boat, perhaps to us too," was the way he brought his chum out of his bunk, all standing, rubbing his eyes as the candle which Maurice had lighted pictured the scene.

Hurriedly dressing while their teeth chattered the boys started a blaze in the stove, and after a bit thawed out sufficiently to go outside, muffled in sweaters and coats, to see what all this racket meant.

They found a wild scene there, with the waves lashing up against the shore, and sending the spray high in the air; already the atmosphere had grown so frigid that ice was forming on the side of the cabin where this spud and foam dashed.

Looking out upon the raging waters the boys shivered at the sight, even with scanty light from the heavenly bodies that were part of the time obscured behind masses of black clouds.

It was frittering snow, and the pros-



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pect of a spell of bad weather looked very promising.

"Let me catch you making any more predictions of storms; won't there be trouble headed your way?" shouted Maurice, with mock severity; whereat the weather sharp laughed and began to feel of the rope that fastened them to the shore.

"With this wind blowing there'd be no chance of our being smashed against the shore here. If it was light I'd say it would pay us to get the anchor out yonder to kind of hold the boat off; but to look at that water I don't think our little dinky would hold out five minutes," continued Maurice, shaking his head.

It was finally concluded to retire to the warmth of the cabin and wait until the morning broke, when they could decide what should be done.

For some hours they sat there, now dozing by the stove, and anon starting up as some unusually weird contortion on the part of the boat gave them the impression that the end had come, and they were about to be tossed into the raging flood.

Those four hours were about as long as any either boy had ever known; for the minutes seemed to pass on leaden wings; but finally a shred of light began to peep in at the window facing the east, and which was not covered with ice as the other happened to be, and they knew day was at hand.

After breakfast they went at the thing with earnestness, for since they must through necessity remain here until the storm abated it was the part of wisdom

"Your old storm's arrived."

to provide for the comfort of their craft, so that as little damage as possible be done her keel

The anchor was tossed as far as they could send it into the river, and then by dragging at the cable they managed to get the boat out a yard or so; when the poles were used to anchor her there temporarily until another cast could be made.

It was a two hours' job, and once the little dinky did come near going down as Thad was recovering the anchor; but in the end they accomplished their object, and the boat was moored snugly some distance off the shore, where she could do very little bumping.

The boys were wet and cold when the task was finshed, and glad to retire to the cabin where they could change their garments and warm up.

"By the way," remarked Thad philosophically, "where would we have been but for my prediction of a cold storm; for it was that that made you call for an early landing and an extra supply of fuel, eh, old chap?" and Maurice only smiled and nodded his head, for he was feeling sleepy after his broken night and hard work.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEARING THE SUNNY SOUTH.

They had another night of it.

Two hours that afternoon they had spent ashore getting more wood, and it was fortunate indeed that they had pulled up where this could be procured, else must they have suffered severely, for a constant fire was needed to keep them at all comfortable, and with such a furious blast blowing it was astonishing the amount of fuel that stove could devour.

During the second night the storm began to die away, and when another dawn came the sun actually shone, though the country looked bleak and cold under the blanket of snow that had fallen.

Just as soon as it was advisable they broke away from their holding ground and once more started down the river, which was still pretty rough; but both boys were so sick and tired of that place they wanted to leave it for new scenes.

And every mile they put behind them meant that they were so much closer to the genial sunny South, of which they had heard so much; after this frigid experience they were of the opinion that they could not reach that balmy region any too soon to suit them.

During the day the wind went down, and when afternoon was waning they sighted the town of Hickman, which was not a great distance from the Tennessee line—the mere mention of this fact caused Thad to give a cheer.

Now, they knew that it was not advisable to stop long at any river town, for fear of trouble with some of the rougher element that haunted the docks; but as some of their supplies had become low and needed replenishing they drew in, and Maurice went ashore to make a purchase, while Thad guarded the boat.

Contrary to their fears nothing happened to give them cause for alarm, and as for the fellows around the landing, Thad found them about on a par with the usual loungers, good-natured chaff predominating; indeed, one of them even made him a present of a little yellow cur that had a pair of bright eyes and an affectionate muzzle, which tickled Thad immensely, he had longed so much for a pet.

They got away from Hickman at a quarter to four, with a clear sky and frosty atmosphere that promised good sailing weather on the morrow.

The yellow dog was immediately named Dixie, and took to his new title from the start, being a lively little chap, full of fun and as frisky as they make them.

He promised to be great company for the boys, and something of a watchdog too, when the occasion warranted it, for his sharp bark upon hearing any foreign sound was enough to arouse the soundest sleeper.

Thad declared he would now be able to sleep with both eyes shut, for up to this time he had been compelled to keep one half open.

Just as Maurice feared they failed to find any place at which to tie up as darkness came on, and it looked as though they would finally have to depend on their anchor and a stout cable; but as they slowly floated along close to the shore Thad's sharp eyes finally detected an opening, which looked very much as though some stream entered the river at this point, and upon pushing in to investigate they found that it was indeed so.

And so they rested comfortably after all, though Maurice was a little fearful lest they be paid a visit by some of the rough characters floating around the levee at Hickman, and who would suppose the little shanty-boat could not have gone many miles down stream before pulling up for the night.

Fortunately for their peace of mind this did not happen; perhaps it was the cold night that deterred them, or it may have been that Thad had made friends with the Hickman fellows—no matter, they saw nothing of visitors, and in the morning got away in grand style, with Dixie barking a farewell to the creek that had served them so well as a harbor of refuge.

So they continued on their voyage, always making progress when it was at all possible, and with each day's setting sun drawing nearer the goal of their hopes, the great city on the lower Mississippi, where Maurice was to meet his uncle, and speak a good word for his chum.

It took them a full week to reach Memphis, for they had poor days as well as good ones, and there were various causes to delay them.

Maurice found a chance to use his gun again one evening when they had tied up in a convenient cove; for it seemed that the ducks had a liking for that very spot and from time to time a little flock would come shooting around the point with the intention of alighting there, where they would be protected from the strong wind that was blowing outside.

As soon as he discovered what was going on Maurice snatched up his gun and with a belt of shells dropped into the dinky, paddling over to the point where he landed, and hiding among some bushes awaited events.

They were not long in coming either, for in less than five minutes a venturesome band of half a dozen teal came swinging in; too late they saw the boat tied up in the cove, and wheeled to depart, when there was a bang! bang! and several concluded to defer their departure.

Out came Maurice, and paddling around he picked up three birds, to the immense delight of Thad, who issued from the cabin at the sound of the reports, and of course executed one of his incomparable hornpipes on the deck at the prospect of another round of game for dinner.

But Maurice was not yet done; this was pretty fair for a start, but there should be more to follow; so he once again ensconced himself in the bushes and waited.

His patience was rewarded, for in less than another five minutes more birds began to head in, and he was kept busy banging away with such success that after the battle was over eight lay upon the still water of the bayou, while several more had floated off down the stream.

Not wishing to let any get away after shooting them, the young sportsman put out in chase in his dinky, and succeeded in finding two; meanwhile Thad, with one of the poles, succeeded in retrieving five of those in the lagoon.

Altogether it was a banner evening, and no wonder they felt joyful as they sat around the late supper; for Thad, with his mouth watering, so he said, for duck, insisted upon preparing a couple right away.

It is not often a fellow can make a fine meal from a duck that two hours previous has been plunging through the atmosphere from the north with a speed of possibly eighty miles an hour; but all manner of things may come to pass to those who voyage down the mighty Mississippi on a shanty boat.

The night in this secluded cove was another pleasant experience which they must always look back to with delight; for it is a curse of the age that is marked by its red and white stones, the one indicating trouble, the other joy unspeakable.

Maurice was not yet done with his business as a provider of viands for the table, and going ashore as the moonlight tempted him, gun in hand, he prowled around and presently had his suspicions confirmed, for he came upon a fat 'possum that yielded up the ghost at the summons of the Marlin gun.

Thad nearly had a fit when he saw what his chum was bringing aboard.

Once he had tasted the animal when with some darkies in the brush—they had gone 'coon hunting with a pack of dogs, and unexpectedly running across a 'possum Thad was fortunate enough to get a few bites of the animal when done—it struck his fancy and he had never forgotten the sweet morsel.

"I bet you had that rascal in mind when you bought those sweet potatoes from that coon yesterday at Memphis," he declared, shaking his forefinger at the other; but Maurice pleaded innocent of the charge, and declared that the only one in the party at all able to prophesy regarding the weather or anything else was Thad himself.

"All the same I imagine they'll just about fit the crime, and tomorrow we'll see how you can get up a real Southern dinner. Now that we are getting down in Dixieland we must pay more attention to the fads that these people cater to, and 'possum heads the list," remarked Maurice, holding the plump animal up so that they could admire his proportions.

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The way the little yellow dog jumped and barked made them suspect that he knew something about hunting 'coons and 'possum, and indeed there are few canines in the South that do not; so Maurice declared that if the chance ever came he meant to try Dixie in that capacity.

There was one good thing about this voyage, and that was the fact of the ever moving current of the river—so long as they kept in its swing they could count on being wafted closer and closer to their destination.

What they had to beware of were the many false channels that led nowhere, or else after winding in and out for ten miles brought the traveler out upon the main stream just a mile below where he entered.

Closely each night Maurice studied his chart and at the same time kept in mind the warning he had received that this map was likely to prove wrong in many cases, so quickly does the mighty current cut new channels along its course.

When three weeks had passed since that night in the sheltered cove they were down in the neighborhood made famous during the Civil War, for Vicksburg lay not more than ten miles ahead.

They had been wonderfully favored during this time, and no accident had occurred to mar the run, the weather being on the whole fair, though one cold storm caught them unprepared and gave them a bad night.

That was a time when Thad's prophecies failed to save them from inconvenience; but those who endeavored to read the weather are not bothered by an occasional upset in their calculations, and on the very next occasion he came to time just as smiling as ever.

The river seemed to be growing with each passing day, and stretched so far into the west that were times when they could dimly see the opposite bank, which Maurice declared must be ten miles distant; though again it would not be anything like that to the Arkansas shore.

But they had now passed the southern border of the State, and he announced that the land they were gazing at far over the tumbling waters was that of Louisiana, the very State for which they were bound.

From this time on they could not expect to make such good progress, because of the unusual care that must be taken in order to keep from losing themselves in one of the false channels.

Again and again would they be tempted to shorten their day's trip by cutting into one of these enticing necks; but Maurice had resolved that he would not allow such a thing, and in the end it proved a wise precaution.

He believed that an ounce of prevention was better than a pound of cure, as it certainly is under all circumstances, and especially during a water voyage down such a treacherous stream as the Mississippi.

They began to have adventures with strolling darkies who visited them after they had tied up for the night; and once when a noisy crowd had threatened to do them bodily harm because the boys had declined to make them a present of tobacco and strong drink both of them had to do guard duty during the night for fear of an attack.

All these things told them that they were now getting down into the sunny South, and that they would meet with disappointments there as well as in other places, for true it is things seem more alluring at a distance; but both boys were sturdy in body and determined in spirit, so that they were not apt to be discouraged by a few backsets of this character.

CHAPTER IX.
ON A PLANTATION.

Once below Vicksburg and the two boys felt that they were doing well.

True, many difficulties had arisen to give them a chance to show their grit and backbone; Maurice was of the opinion that they had come out of these conflicts with flying colors, and each victory seemed to renew their self confidence, as though that were the true reason for the encounter.

There was no lack of shooting in this region, for ducks traded between the river and adjacent lagoons at all hours of the day, and many times Maurice was able to bring down a feathered pilgrim of the air with a shot from the deck of the shanty-boat itself, retrieving the same with a nail fastened to the end of one of the poles.

What interested the boys most were the cotton fields that they began to see.

Of course both were familiar with cotton in many of its aspects, having been born and brought up close to the Kentucky border; but these big fields where they could see myriads of the open bolls not yet culled, late as the season was, caused them much pleasure.

And the negroes became more jovial the further south they went—it seemed as if the black man in migrating north left his natural condition behind, and assumed many of the cares of the white man; down in the cotton country he was at his best, full of laughter, careless of tomorrow so long as he had a dime in his ragged trousers, and of course light-fingered when he saw a chance to lift anything, and no one appeared to be looking.

The boys had a lot of fun with some of these good natured darkies who came about the fire they were accustomed to starting on shore when the occasion allowed.

Sometimes they bribed them to dance a hoe-down or sing songs as the spirit moved.

Maurice was surprised to find that they favored the sentimental songs of the day, such as were being sung in the North, and he wondered so at this that finally he asked one fellow, a gray-headed old chap, what had become of the negro melodies once so famous, and now so seldom heard.

Then he learned that the negro of the South had reached a stage that he does not wish to be reminded of the fact that he was once a slave and the property of a white master; and as most of those dear old songs are along that line he gives them the go-by when choosing his minstrel lays.

But by a little species of bribery they managed to induce some of their visitors to sing the "S'wanee Ribber," "Massa's in de Cold, Cold Groun'," "Black Joe," and others of a similar nature.

"Dear ole hom'ny corn" seemed to be a prime favorite among them, and the boys themselves never tired of joining in the chorus.

After they had lost several articles from some of these blacks pilfering they learned to keep the cabin door locked when going ashore; for it bent on stealing the Southern negro can accomplish his purpose in spite of watchful eyes, since there will come a moment when attention is directed in another quarter, and like a shadow he will creep aboard and accomplish his end.

Another thing began to trouble them about now, and this was the fact that their slender stock of money had given out, with some weeks ahead before Uncle Ambrose could be expected to come to the rescue.

Hence it became necessary that they find some means of earning something.

Thad could fall back upon his experience as a carpenter, and if he could get employment now and then might bring in enough of the needful to supply them with the necessities of life; and Maurice on his part would only too willingly have done anything in his line if he could find a chance—he was a pretty fair bookeeper, but it did not seem likely that he would run across any one in this part of tae country who wanted his books balanced.

Still both of them began to be on the lookout for opportunities, determined to do whatever their hand came in contact with.

It was at Gibson's Landing that Thad struck his first chance.

Things were getting rather low, and they had not enjoyed a cup of coffee for two days, on account of a lack of supplies, or the wherewithal to purchase the same.

Maurice was cleaning some fish they

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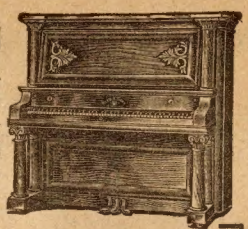

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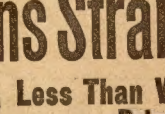

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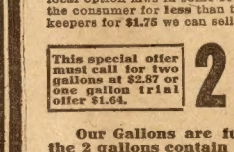

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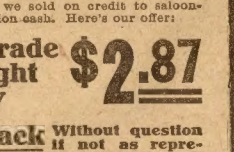

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had taken that day when he saw Thad coming at an unusually swift pace, and a look on his face that spoke volumes.

"And now, what?" he demanded, as his partner sprang aboard.

"Bully news—I've struck a job. Last a week or so, and give us enough cash to carry us through with careful nursing. And that ain't the whole of it too," was the way he broke loose.

"It's good as far as you've gone; now, what else can there be to make you feel so fine?" demanded Maurice.

"Mr. Simon Buckley——"

"Who's Mr. Simon Buckley?"

"Why, I was just going to tell you—he's a rich planter back here a bit. I happened to mention the fact that I was a carpenter looking for a job when he jumped on to me and said he was looking for just such a man. Then we got talking and I told him all about what we were trying to do, and he seemed interested, and asked questions, principally about you. What d'ye think, he knows your Uncle Ambrose; why once, many years ago they were together in Cuba? And he wants both of us to come with him tomorrow when he starts back to his home; because he says he's got his books in a terrible muss, and would be mighty glad to have you straighten 'em out; and what d'ye think of all that, eh?"

Maurice smiled at his enthusiasm, but was feeling a bit the same way himself.

"Why, all I can say is what you're so fond of shouting whenever any good luck floats our way—bully, bully, bully all around! I felt sure we'd strike something before the worst came; and as usual it was you who had to run across it. But how are we going to leave our floating home while we pay this week's visit to the plantation of Mr. Buckley?"

"I thought of that when he said you must come too, and when I spoke of it to him he told me of a man he knew living on the river—that's his shanty you see below there, with the chimney on the outside—who would look after the boat and Dixie for a dollar and be glad of the chance. It's all fixed, my boy, and you needn't worry a bit. We'll be sure of our grub for a week, see something of a simon true Southern plantation, earn about twenty dollars between us, and get in great shape for business. Say, is it all right?"

Maurice of course declared that it was, and thereupon Thad did one of his regular hornpipes, to the amusement of some darkies on the shore, who began mocking him, but in a way that did not give offense.

So that night they made arrangements with the man Mr. Buckley recommended to keep their boat in his care, along with the yellow dog.

In the morning they bade farewell to their comfortable floating home for a brief time, and meeting the planter, joined him in a ride to the interior where his plantation was located.

Mr. Simon Buckley was a character very interesting to Maurice.

He had been something of a soldier of fortune since the Civil War, and drifted pretty much around the whole world, so that he was a walking encyclopedia of knowledge upon almost any subject.

What interested Maurice most of all was his association with Uncle Ambrose in Cuba many years before; and it was with considerable surprise that the lad learned how his steady-going relative had once upon a time been a wild blade, an adventurer as it were, ready to take up with anything that promised excitement, and a hope of gain in a fairly decent way.

Simon Buckley had been very fond of Anthony it would seem, and his delight at running across a nephew of his old comrade was unmistakable.

The voyagers had never met with a luckier bit of fortune than when Thad chanced to interview this veteran.

Mr. Buckley had long ago settled down to a humdrum life as a planter, having wedded the daughter of a big man in the parish, and when the old spirit of turbulence grew too strong within him to resist he had to work it off by a bear hunt in the Mississippi canebrakes, or perhaps a lynching bee—he did not state this latter positively, but there was something in the wink he gave the boys while speaking of such things that told them the truth.

They were too wise to think of starting an argument with a Southern man upon a subject of which they had a very small amount of information, and which entered upon his daily life; so they said nothing while he was present.

That ride was one long to be remembered, for they saw things that might never have come under their observation otherwise; various plantations were passed, and collections of negro cabins, around which hosts of youngsters were playing, as free from care as the rabbit that ran across the road—indeed, much more so, for Bunny had to look sharp lest he afford a meal for one of his many enemies, while these pickaninnies had their daily wants supplied, and grew up like so many puppies.

Along about noon they reached their destination.

The Buckley plantation was well known in that section as one of the best in western Mississippi.

Of course the main staple was cotton, king of the South; but there were various other products that the owner raised; he had a grinding mill and produced a large amount of sugar and molasses in season; then on some low lands he grew rice of a superior quality, his ambition being to constantly improve on what had been produced the preceding season; and his experience all over the world proved of value to him now, when he could calmly review what he had seen and profit by it.

The place seemed an ideal Southern plantation to Maurice, and he soon wished he had a camera along with which to secure some views that he could carry with him wherever he went; but as the owner had a weakness that way the want was supplied before they had been there two days, and when the time came to depart lo, Maurice had a dozen or two pictures in his possession to show "Old Ambrose," as the planter said.

Indeed, it took Maurice just two days to straighten the books out, and then Mr. Buckley kept him busy with that camera; for he had had miserable success himself in handling it, and was just hoping some one would come along with a better knowledge of such things than himself.

Thad had found congenial employment, and no matter what the work that came under his hands it was finished in a manner to call forth expressions of satisfaction from the proprietor; who only too gladly, at parting with his young friends, gave Thad a letter of recommendation to Uncle Ambrose—a document that the said carpenter valued more than anything he possessed.

The planter's family counted five souls, his wife, a spirited lady who could ride a horse as well as any man, two girls, aged respectively 12 and 14, a boy of 9 and a little curly headed darling named "Major"—at least that was the only name our boys heard all the while they were there.

All of them did their best to make the stay of the Northern lads agreeable, and when a Southern family does that it goes without saying that the recipients of their attention must be having a glorious time; for there are no people on the face of the earth who know more about hospitality than these natives of good old Dixieland.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming year many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It only costs you $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Trance or Death.

(Continued from page nine.)

impossible of words, had a blind kind of birth in my mind, only to seem trivial beside the incomparable fact that the man now lay before me dead, heinously slain in the midst of a great nobility of purpose, in the very act of offering himself as a sacrifice for another's sin. The thought and the spectacle moved me profoundly.

I turned toward the coroner. "I do not understand it," I said, "but I believe that this man was my father. From whom he received his death I do not know. Perhaps the fatal thrust was given him outside the room; perhaps it was after he had entered; I cannot say. As for the astonishing matter of this paper in my hand, it—it—is beyond my comprehension. I—am—ill, ill with exhaustion; I cannot bear more now."

CHAPTER XXXV.

In the afternoon of the sixth day from the mob's attempt upon my life, the poor stranger having been laid to rest in Garcia's little graveyard, and my strength having partially returned, Hamlin and I set out for Magnolia Place. We were mounted upon good horses, and each bore a revolver at his hip. With the noon hour a rain had ceased to fall, and now all the air was a fount of freshness.

But I had little joy of it. My soul seemed to leave me and go through the forest-lands straight to Magnolia House, and then straight onward to that little cold home of death under the oaks upon the knoll. From one to the other my thought trembled unremittingly, like a needle disturbed by the reversal of the pole. I had scanned with great eagerness the few names written during recent weeks in the register at the tavern at Garcia, but Dr. Beckwith's was not among them. I wondered where he was; if he had arrived from France; if the written appeal, which I had committed to Dr. Ainsworth's care in the prison at New Orleans had reached him, and if in pity of my plight he were even now hastening to Magnolia Place. I think, in its proper place in this narrative, I failed to set down the fact that during my last conversation with Ainsworth in my cell, I gave into his keeping Dr. Stanwood's diary, to be put into Beckwith's hands upon his return from abroad.

But that morning as we followed the winding road toward Magnolia Place, Marguerite lay very near the heart of my thought, my apprehension and my anticipation. I was now to meet her face to face, the woman I felt that I had no right to love, yet dearer for the wrong I had done her in her husband, and fairer to my fancy from a thousand hours of brooding. I was now to tell her all, to lay my secret soul bare.

During the first hour Hamlin left me to my thoughts, for he was alert and had his blue eyes wide open for danger. However, no new sign of hatred fell across our path. Like a forest fire, violence seemed to have been subdued by rain and castigation. Yet there were embers burning, though invisible to us.

"You allis don't seem to be a-keerin' if school keeps or not," said the young deputy at last, fetching a low laugh as he looked at me. "I never seed a man w'at keered so little fer any trouble 'at might be hidin' 'round."

I jerked nervously at the rein and looked about me and tried to smile. "Sometimes one has enough trouble inside him without watching for it around the corners," I replied. "When I say that I think I should hesitate in making a choice between fighting those men again and doing my duty today, you may understand me."

He gave a low whistle and looked at me curiously a moment. "Well," he commented, "if you allis tackle this dooty es yeh did them fellers y'll lay it out cold, shore!"

"Hamlin, I'm puzzled about this mob affair. I never for a moment expected such a reception as the people have given me here. I cannot understand it," I said.

"Polertics wuz at th' bottom uv the trouble, Mr. Stanwood," he said. "Bud Sivers—I got 'im judged all right—he's been er fishin' fur jedge all erlong—quite a spell now, an' w'en 'e couldn't make his claim win weth th' convention, 'e wanted to be dippity; but Marker 'pinted me; so that stuck in his craw mighty heavy, an' 'e hates me like rats do pizen. He wanted to git me inter trouble weth th' voters, fur thar'll be a special 'lection soon fur shurff, now that Marker's gone. So 'e rode all round an' tole th' country fellers that you allis had not only killed y'r pap but had murdered Marker, an' wuz tryin' to dig outen the State, on'y that th' wind-storm blowed yeh ashore nigh town spite uv all yeh could do.

"He made a pack uv fools outen th' boys. W'en th' truth comes out, which hits bound to do, Bud 'll go to th' State pen, shore. Most all th' boys wuz country fellers, an' a whole passel uv 'em got hurt, but I reckon none uv 'em won't die, least I hope not. Of co'se them 'at you allis hit with th' cheer has got putty bad heads onto 'em; not much worse 'en w'at they had afore, I reckon. Four or five uv the boys will carry scars the stranger give 'em as long as they live. Well, I can't see but hit serves 'em right."

"Of course it is hardly their affair to hang men, especially if the person happens to be innocent," said I; "I hope they have enough of it."

"Oh, plenty, plenty. Anyhow most uv 'em has. Th' jedge explained matters to 'em that night; at least he tried to. He'll let 'em all go, I hev an idee, savin' mebby Bud Sivers. If th' sentersment uv th' voters is ergin Bud, w'y, 'e is a goner, that's all. Th' jedge's ear is always harkin' fur th' voter's—Ho! Whoa! Dang th' luck!"

A rifle cracked in the woods, our horses leaped almost from under us, and Hamlin's hat flew from his head with a bullet hole through the top of it. "Mighty king!" cried the deputy, as we swing on the bridle-bit and whirling his horse around, "but that wuz cowardly!" He dashed straight into the bushy woods in the direction from which the lead had issued. In a few moments I heard his revolver give voice, and in a few minutes more he rode out into the highway. I was standing behind my horse with my weapon cocked and aimed across the animal's back at the underbrush, watching warily for any moving object.

Hamlin tok up his hat and looked at it rather ruefully. There was a bright red flush upon each of his cheeks, and his eyes glistened, but he spoke quietly. "Hit's spiled, but hit's putty good evidence," he said, smiling oddly.

"Did you—did you get him?" I asked wondering within me if bloodshed and death were to go on about me eternally.

"Naw," he said disgustedly, "I on'y cotched a glimse uv 'im as 'e lit out through th' thicket. I fired, but missed; no good chance. But I knowed 'im; hit wuz Bud Sivers' brother Hame. You allis can see how hit is. I'll bring that 'ar man t' th' jug or he'll leave the country, one or tother."

He said nothing for a little while as we rode onward. His jaw seemed set like a rock. He seemed by nature of so kindly a cast that anger kindled in him very slowly, but, being once ablaze, I fancied it might burn on until either he or his enemy were consumed.

"An' Hame wants to marry Sally Pearson!" he suddenly broke out, as if speaking to an invisible person and ending with a scoffing laugh. "Well, he's kicked his ash-cake inter th' coals now, shore!" He at once grew oddly cheerful for a man who but ten minutes before had been within a half an inch of death. Ah, not all war or politics, I mused, but a little love, too, as usual!

As we rode, the ground flowing now gray, now black, under us, with tree-trunks racing by us toward Garcia, and here and there flowery thickets with birds springing out of them to the tree-tops, we drew down upon that lowland which spread away into the vast swamp called the Deadlanes. Suddenly, the deputy drew rein and turned his horse toward Garcia. "I'm goin' back," he said. "I feel like lookin' fur Hame Sivers. I reckon you allis won't need me further. Bein' out on bail yeh won't need t' bother twel I let yeh know thet y'r wanted. Don't fret none; things 'll come out all right fur yeh."

I wrung his great hand, and with many assurances of my gratitude and good will, he sped away, glancing from light to shade and waving his hand to me as he went.

I rode onward. It thrilled me to the heart to feel how near I was to Marguerite.

I now remember, and with gratitude, that of all the beauteous valley held, yes, even more than the bridge itself, eloquent with memory, or even the turret of Magnolia House, my heart was stirred with the vision of that little knoll of ground to the southeast where, under the shaggy oaks, my mother's ivy-covered home lay in the yellowing light. I was coming home to that more than to aught else. The little tomb and she who slept in it were of my old childhood life; Mar-

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guerite, the new servants and the changed house, were of the present feverous anguished season.

I felt that my first duty was with the dead, happily, it might be, the living dead. I rode down across the bridge, the horse's hoofs striking a hollow, echoing note from the heavy live-oak boards, every knot and splinter of which seemed fastened forever in my memory. I drew the animal to a halt at the center of the structure for a moment, feeling a fall and ebb of spirit that was like a stone on my breast.

My fingers shook as I lifted the rusty latch of the gate, and when I had crossed the sacred ground and stood at the door of the crypt I was quivering in every limb. No hand had been there; the staples were loose in the holes, the iron bar laid loosely across the door as I had left it. I drew the staples out, took the bar down, and drew the door open softly. My breath came thick, and there was a loud beating of pulses all over me as I stepped in and stood uncovered in the dead silence. The lid of the cedar box lay slightly awry, as I had left it. I put it gently aside and stood still a moment, my every sense seeming to hang back and vibrate, fearfully reluctant to face the issue of the moment. Then suddenly I took the coffin-lid up and looked. With a cry I fell upon my knees, as I had once before in the same place, and hanging at the coffin's edge, felt all my little stock of strength ebb from me. I could only put my hand on her cold cheek and let it lie there, while my heart eased itself in tears.

She seemed just the same. The strong yellow light of sunset, spreading low along the ground, and filling every dent and crevice as with an ethereal, golden fluid, showed me that she had not changed. The mystery of her state remained. Sweet, tranquil, like an image of fine wax she lay, yet clothed in a kind of majesty of repose. It struck me to the heart that my words of endearment brought no smile to her face, no fond response from her lips. Her features had been wont to leap all alive to my every word of love in the old days, now they seemed fixed in a placidity that no passion, however pleaded, might ever move or change.

If she were gone away from the world indeed, sunk into the silence which no plummet of help might ever sound, then it was such a phase of death as left the common decay of tissue no power to begin its process. Cell and molecule and every atom in her seemed standing still, preserved from dissolution by the inhering purposes of its function, yet balked of all power to flux toward its object.

I gazed upon the beloved face. Oh, that Beckwith would come! that some power of Heaven, or from that secret, nether store of forces which seem demoniac, yet, perhaps, in their last process are divine, could be brought to bear upon this spell, which locked the warm life of the dear one who bore me in such cold helplessness!

I got up at last. I was not fit to judge or reason, my affections being so engaged. I knew that it all might prove an hallucination of the heart; but never man yet shook off a truth born of hope and love by escaping into the hold of logic—no more did I. For when I had taken a last look, seeing her so life-like, and had reverently replaced the covering over her and came out into the failing light, a great wave of hope and expectation of her return to life welled up in me.

Then suddenly, as if a hand had smitten me upon the forehead, I burst out of reverie to all that was about and before me; for, lifting my eyes from the ground, I saw, with a sudden leap of heat into my temples, a white figure cross the upper gallery of Magnolia House. Then all that I was, and all that I was to face and suffer, rose before me, and I faltered and stopped and looked up to me as if for deliverance. In a moment the sight of that white form had made me a coward.

I turned off and crossed the cornfields, and came to the horse tied near the bridge. Mounting the animal I turned in upon the road, but pulled at the rein there, wavering and hesitating. It was not now as I had thought it would be, when I reflected upon this step miles away from Marguerite. Fear and shame had seized me, now that I was all but in her presence. I was in the hands of the law and surely she must hold me guilty, since I had gone from her so mysteriously; besides, all the evidence compromising me, which clustered about that event upon the bridge, must have come to her ears.

But it must be done, and yet I could not do it. I let the restless horse turn back toward Garcia, but when he came upon the bridge and neared that fatal spot at the center of it, I wrenched him back upon his haunches, whirled him, and spurred and sent him in a headlong run down the approach and through the avenue of pepper-trees, for I suddenly fell mad with loathing of my heart's weak cowardice. When I leaped down at the gate and turned toward it, Marguerite was standing there!

My angry mood fell away from me as if it were a cloak snatched off by the wind. I know not what shone in my face, but if my feelings were painted there my countenance must surely have been a strange thing to look upon.

(Continued next week.)

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

A DISGUISED BLESSING.

I'm all broke out around my head
An' arms an' legs with whut I've got;
My face is sort o' specky red,
I guess there ain't a single spot
That I kin find all over me
But whut's a great, big blist'ry patch—
They itch me somethin' awful—gee!
An' ma she sez I mustn't scratch!

It wuz last week when I begun
T' find 'em comin' on me, so
I kind o' thought I'd better run
An' tell my ma—she's sure t' know
Jest whut a feller ought t' take
Frum out th' "mother's med'cin' box"—
She looked at me an' sed, "Land sake!
You've gone an' ketched th' chicken pox!"

So now I got t' stay inside,
An' jest can't run around an' play—
You bet at first I pret' near cried
T' think I had t' do that way!
I kind o' thought I'd like to chase
That chicken pox t' some far clime;
But gee! ma dassen't scrub my face—
I wish I had it all th' time!

Why?

Once there was a patient woman, who lived away off in the woods. She had seven children and their names were Annie and Bennie and Charlie and Dora and Ethel and Frank and George, and they asked their mother, "Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?" all the time. Every minute somebody said, "Why?" and ran away fast. Then she said: "Girls, run out in the woods and play," and the girls said, "Why?" and ran away as fast as the boys.

When they got to the edge of the woods where they always played, they found that they could not get in. The vines were like big, strong wires. They said. "Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?" but nobody answered them. In a minute all the others saw that Annie and Dora were in and running along the little path, but the rest could not find the place.

Annie and Dora ran until they came to an open space in the woods, and all around in the trees sat birds—crowds of them—and they all screamed: "You had a little bird in a cage. Why did you take his tail feathers and put them in your doll-hats?"

Dora and Annie cried and cried and said they had not thought. Then all the birds swooped down on them, and when they swooped up again, each one had a long gold hair in his bill and Dora and Annie haven't a single hair left on their bald heads. So they ran home.

Then Charlie and Bennie got in, and walked and walked till they came to a flat place full of white sand, with the sun shining on it. On the rocks around sat millions of hundreds of red squirrels and black squirrels and gray squirrels and striped squirrels and they pointed their paws at Bennie and Charlie and shouted, "Why did you take our piles of nuts last autumn?" Then all the squirrels leaped on Charlie's and Bennie's shadows that lay all black on the white sand and pinched them and scratched them. It hurt Charlie and Bennie more than if the squirrels had scratched and bit their arms and legs, and the more they cried and jumped the harder the squirrels scratched and bit, until there wasn't a speck of either of their shadows left. Then the two bad boys ran away as fast as they could.

Then Frank and George and Ethel got in. They were the littlest and they kept tight hold of hands and looked for the others. They came to a great field, and it was full of ants and grasshoppers and bees and wasps and bugs and squirrels and rabbits, who all stood in a great long row, and said, "Why don't you try to be good little children? You should set your big brothers and sisters a good example and not tag along and do just as they do. Why don't you try? You may go now, but we don't b'lieve that you can ever say anything but 'why?' again." And the three ran home as hard as ever they could.

They found Charlie and Bennie putting piles of corn and seeds and crumbs and nuts under the trees for the squirrels and crying because they wanted their shadows, though their mother told them she was sure their shadows would grow again if they worked hard and were kind, and didn't ask "why" all the time.

Annie and Dora, with their heads tied up in handkerchiefs, had let their little birds fly out of the cage, and they were putting strings and thread and cotton on all the bushes so that the birds could build nests. Their mother said their yellow hair was sure to grow if they did their work well and were kind and didn't ask "why."

But when the children asked George and Frank and Ethel where they had been, they cried and cried, and all they would say was "Why? Why? Why?" over and over.

"They can't say anything else," said their poor mother at last.

"They are silly-billys," said Charlie, and then he said very quickly and loud: "Do you want your suppers?" and before they knew it they said, "Yes! Yes! Yes!" So they all went to supper and worked hard and were kind and they never said "why?" when their mother told them anything for ever after.

Taken Literally.

A lady of rather ponderous proportions reached Fifth avenue and East Forty-second street, New York, one day just as there was an unusual rush of vehicles. Making a mad plunge in the direction of the policeman, she cried: "Can you see me across the street?"

"Why, Lord bless you, ma'am, I can see you a mile and a half away!" was the consoling answer.

Felt That Way.

Little Charles, aged about 4 years, was out playing one day, when he was stung by a bumble bee. His cries brought his mother to his assistance. After he became quiet he said, "Mamma, did you ever have a little boy bumble bee sting you?" His mother said she did not know and asked him if he did. He said, "No, it was the old man that stung me."

when they tried to open the door again they found they could not open it.

Then they began to be frightened, for they thought they might have to stay there all their lives, and so they cried and banged on the door, and pretty soon their father and mother came running to see what the trouble was about.

Then their mother called to them through the hole where the handle of the door had been, "Don't be frightened, children!" and then father ran and got some screws and a screw-driver. He called to them to put back their part of the door-knob through the door, and he fastened the other knob in place with screws. Then they could open the door, and quite glad they were to do it. The children ran out and kissed their mother and father good morning and went down to breakfast, and to this day nobody knows how that door-knob came off, except you and me and the elf.

Same Thing.

Little 4-year-old Daniel was watching with intense interest some people who were enjoying the afternoon at cards. One person called for the "joker," and with the instant little Daniel was on his feet and inquired: "Where's the fooler?"

First Tot (looking in family album)—See, that's father in his uniform; he's only got one leg.
Second Tot—Where's it gone?
First Tot—Hush! . . . . it's in Heaven.

The Door-Knob.

There was once a door-knob—a round, white, china door-knob that was fastened to a door with three little screws. One night a little elf came along and saw those three little screws and said, "Oh, dear me! What nice little screws those would be to take home and play with."

So he crept up all softly and unscrewed those three little screws and put them in his pocket, and then he danced away home, fairly hugging himself to think how naughty he had been.

Now the door to which the door-knob belonged was a nursery door, and inside that nursery were three little children all fast asleep and as good as gold. They slept all through the night, and never knew what the little elf had been doing, and when they awoke in the morning and saw by the clock that it was time to get up, they—well, they did not get up right away but they got up pretty soon. They got all dressed and ready to go downstairs, but when they went to open the door—what do you think happened? When they tried to turn the handle of the door it came off in their hands, and they heard the thud that the handle on the other side made as it dropped on the floor.

First they thought it was a great joke to have a door-knob with an iron stem to it to play with, but after they had spun it around on the floor awhile they began to want breakfast, and then

Borrowed Pupils.

Most school teachers, it may be said, find some enjoyment in teaching school, though here and there one may turn up that does not like her job, but it is a strange and unusual teacher that goes so far as to borrow children in order to have enough to keep her busy in school. Such an unheard of thing happened in Oregon, where Miss Gertrude Peeler teaches a little district school out in the country. There are not many families in this part of Oregon, and so the school is never large, and this winter many of the families went to a warmer part of the State until spring should come along. Soon there were only three children left in the school. Now, it is a rule of the school district that there shall be no classes and consequently no teacher if less than five children live in the district, and so Miss Peeler saw her position dissolving into air. She knew that she would not be able to live on air, and so she had to increase the attendance at the school. She could not think at first of any way to do this, but suddenly a bright idea came to her, and she wrote a letter. In a few days her two small nieces had come to live with her in answer to the letter. Their mother had lent them for the winter, and they stayed on and went to school, where they brought the number of pupils up to the necessary five, and Miss Peeler held her job.

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